



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

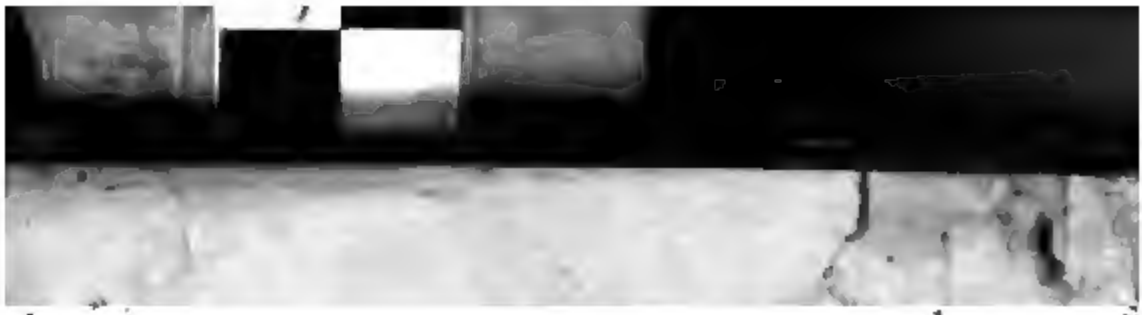
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



37.  
536.



—

.





**MEMOIRS**  
**OF THE**  
**LIFE AND WORKS**  
**OF**  
**SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.**

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WALK.

**MEMOIRS**  
**OF THE**  
**LIFE AND WORKS**  
**OF THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE**  
**SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.**

**BY HIS SON,**  
**THE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, M. A.**

**FEME. COLL. OXFORD, F. R. S. E.**

**AUTHOR OF DISSERTATIONS VINDICATING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ;**  
**AN ESSAY ON CHURCH PATRONAGE, &c.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**



**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.**  
**T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.**

**MDCCCXXXVII.**

536.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**TO**

**THE HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL**

**SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**

**THIS MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND WORKS**

**OF THE**

**FOUNDER OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY**

**THE AUTHOR.**



## PREFACE.

---

My father, previous to his last illness, frequently expressed a wish, that after his decease I should publish a Memoir of his life and literary undertakings. The task thus imposed upon me was laborious as well as delicate. Notwithstanding his habitual love of order and arrangement, his voluminous papers, the accumulation of above sixty years, amounting, as he sometimes calculated, to forty or fifty thousand, had, from various causes, fallen into confusion. The subjects to be treated of were miscellaneous, and most of them quite alien to my usual studies and professional engagements. In order to explain fully his connexion with different events and individuals, I found it necessary to go over the history and parliamentary proceedings of more than half a century, as well as to investigate the details of Agriculture and Finance—the two leading subjects to which his attention was directed.

Nor was the delicacy inferior to the laboriousness of the work. My relation to the subject of the Memoir necessarily furnished me with facts, to which a stranger could have no access, but did not permit the exercise of that freedom with which a neutral person is allowed to treat the sentiments and conduct of the dead. While, however, filial duty obliged me to commence the task, I was encouraged in the prosecution of it, by reflecting that the biography of an individual, who had occupied so large a space for many years in the eye of the public, and who had been deeply engaged in so many departments of political and social usefulness, could only fail of interesting a large portion of readers from great deficiencies in the execution.

Where such a multiplicity of disputed topics fell of necessity under discussion, entire coincidence of opinion could scarcely be anticipated between the person described and his biographer. My aim has been to keep myself as much as possible out of view, and to bring forward my father's own arguments and views. As my sentiments on various subjects are already before the public, and remain unchanged, I have been under less necessity of interposing explanations as to the degree in which, on particular questions, our opinions differed or concurred.



In the most important parts of this work, my materials were ample, even to superfluity; not so for other portions, and especially for the period of my father's early life. Few companions of his youth are now alive, and the reminiscences of these few are vague and scanty. Perhaps it is not always true of old men that they remember with the vividness ascribed to them the events of youth. A small number of particulars, and those often the most trivial, generally include all the reminiscences of an aged mind.

In the selection of my materials I encountered considerable difficulty. Some of them referred to facts of no present importance—some to political events so obscurely hinted in the papers before me, or so entirely overlooked by contemporary historians and annalists, as to defy all explanation. Justice in many cases to the departed, and in many more to the living, forbade the publication of papers intrinsically important, but guarded by the seal of confidential secrecy. The question, how far an historian or biographer may avail himself of assistance from private letters and memoranda intrusted to him, is one to be approached with tenderness and caution. In communicating with their friends men think aloud. To decide, therefore, upon the publication of thoughts thus freely imparted, involves a serious, and often

painful responsibility. The subject has been judiciously discussed by Lord Hailes. Remarking on Mr Servan's able Thesis on the impropriety of publishing Posthumous Pieces or Letters written in confidence, Lord Hailes writes thus to Dr Erskine :—  
“ If I received a letter from a person which contains things hurtful to the character of that person, or things which he would not wish to have made public, I should suppress them, unless obedience to the commands of the law, or a sense of duty to society obliged me to reveal them. But that the same rule is to take place for ever, and after I and my correspondents are in our graves, is, I think, to carry matters too far. Suppose that to be the rule, and apply it to past times, and see how history would be darkened. For example, without such letters, how little would be known of the history of the last century ? To give one instance out of a hundred, what would have been known of the character and conduct of M. de Maintenon without such publications ? And yet that is necessary for the knowledge of forty years of the reign of Louis XIV. Without such publications we cannot have a just notion of the virtues and vices of eminent persons ; but we must take them just as we find them, in panegyrics and satires published in their own time.” \*

\* Moncreiff's Life of Erskine, p. 358, &c.

- In the completion of this work, I found nothing more arduous than to reduce so many unconnected subjects to a clear and natural arrangement. Where an individual has been deeply immersed in political and literary pursuits of various kinds, and where his private history has but little bearing upon his public life, it must often be a perplexing consideration whether unity of subject, or chronological order shall have the preference. I have endeavoured as much as possible to preserve both. In three cases, however, unity of subject appeared to me so important as to justify a departure from chronology : I allude to the chapters on the Statistical Account of Scotland ; on the Board of Agriculture ; and on the improvements in Caithness, my father's native county.

Traits of generosity and public spirit, such as those recorded in this work, ought to call forth from any narrator expressions of approbation. But in the room of eulogies from myself, which my relation to the deceased would lead the reader to regard as words of course, I have substituted encomiums supplied by more disinterested as well as more competent judges. The praise so often and so liberally bestowed upon the public services of Sir John Sinclair was not dictated by party zeal : he belonged to no party ; and has therefore bequeathed his reputation, not to the

jealous watchfulness of a few political associates, but to the unbiassed collective judgment of his countrymen.

: Although, as I have said, the task of writing these pages devolved upon me by my father's own desire, I long hoped that he would fix upon a biographer possessed of more leisure and of better information; besides, that I felt invincible reluctance to anticipate, by formal or busy preparation for his Memoirs, an event so melancholy as the death of a venerated parent. Thus, I lost the benefit of his own explanations as to particular facts and opinions necessarily entering into the work. But if I have made this sacrifice to feelings in which my readers naturally will sympathize, I have endeavoured to atone for the omission, by the most careful research among his papers, and by the most ample enquiries among his literary and political friends.

I shall only add, that I had great satisfaction in supplying some of the materials for a short account of my father's life, in a series of contributions to the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture. The Memoir, in that valuable periodical, is from the pen of D. M. Moir, Esq. of Musselburgh; and is written with his usual ability, good feeling, and research.

# CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
GENEALOGY—Lady Janet Sinclair—Education at Edinburgh—At Glasgow—At Oxford—For the Scotch Bar—For the English Bar—First Tour on the Continent—First Marriage—Thurso Castle—Observations on the Sabbath—Dr Adam Smith—Observations on the Scottish Dialect—Dr Johnson, . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

Entrance on Public Life—State of Parties—Speech on the Dutch War—Naval Tracts—St Alban's Club—Mr President Laurens—Change of Ministers—Lord North—Rockingham Administration—Scarcity in Scotland—Highland Dress—Reform in Parliament—Shelburne Administration—Pamphlet on Gibraltar—Coalition—Pamphlets on Finance—Pitt Administration—Westminster Scrutiny—History of the Revenue—Death of Mrs Sinclair—Second Visit to the Continent—Bishop Watson—Baronetcy, . . . .	53
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

Remarks on Travelling—Denmark—Count Bernstorff—Professor Thorkelin—Sweden—Gustavus—Russia—Empress Catherine—Princess Daschkow—Grand Duke Paul—Moscow—Count Romanzoff—Poland—Stanialaus—Tepper the Banker—Austria—Emperor Joseph—Prussia—Frederic William—Prince Henry—Mirabeau—Hanover—Duke of York—Holland—French Intrigues—Flanders—George III.—Lord Chancellor Thurlow—Presidents Washington and Jefferson, . . . . .	132
--	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

Second Marriage—Macdonald Family—Bosvillians—Habits of Life—Useful Suggestions—Differences with Mr Pitt—Warren Hastings—Neutral Party—African Association—Regency Question—Slave Trade—British Wool Society—Cheviot Sheep, . . .	180
--	-----

## CHAPTER V.

French Revolution—Meetings at Mr Windham's—Exchequer Bills—Plan of licensing Bankers—Origin of the Board of Agriculture—Arthur Young—First Battalion of Fencibles—Second Battalion—Captain Fraser—Marquess Cornwallis—Lord Moira—Exchequer Bills for the Colonies—Loyalty Loan—Thoughts on Peace—Suspension of Cash Payments—Lord Moira—Duke of Northumberland—Lord Malmesbury's Negotiations—Letter to Lord Thurlow—Neutral Party—Income Tax—Scotch Representation—Addington Administration—M. Otto—American Correspondence, . . .	228
---	-----

# MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Genealogy—Lady Janet Sinclair—Education at Edinburgh—At Glasgow—At Oxford—For the Scotch Bar—For the English Bar—First Tour on the Continent—First Marriage—Thurso Castle—Observations on the Sabbath—Dr Adam Smith—Observations on the Scottish Dialect—Dr Johnson.

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR was born at Thurso Castle, in the county of Caithness, on the 10th of May, 1754. The surname of *Sinclair*, *St Clare*, or *de Sancto Claro*, is of Norman origin. One of the villages in Normandy, still bearing the name, must have originally given its territorial appellation to its feudal proprietor. David I., or St David, founder of so many monasteries in Scotland as to be pointedly designated by his less pious successor, James I., “a sair saint

for the Crown," introduced many Norman settlers into Scotland, and granted the manor of Roslin, near Edinburgh, to William de Sancto Claro, early in the twelfth century. From him descended Sir William, who, having married one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Malise, Earl of Strathern, Caithness and Orkney, brought the last of these titles into his family. His son consequently was acknowledged Earl of Orkney in 1379, by Haco, King of Norway, and also by Robert II. the earliest Scottish king of the Stuart line. To the third Earl of Orkney (grandson of the above, chancellor of Scotland, and builder of the chapel at Roslin, that rich specimen of our Gothic architecture) was granted, in 1455, the earldom of Caithness, as the compensation for a claim, through his mother, to the lordship of Nithsdale. The family of Sinclair, thus established in Caithness, was not long afterwards deprived arbitrarily by James III. of the earldom of Orkney, but retained that of Caithness, which became thenceforth their chief title.

William, Earl of Caithness, notwithstanding his loss of the earldom of Orkney, continued still so powerful, that, from his three sons, branched three eminent families—those of the Lords Sinclair, the Earls of Caithness, and the Sinclairs of Roslin. The family of the Lords Sinclair appears to have been for some time extinct in the male line. The title, however, by a singular arrangement, was conveyed to a



family of the same name, but bearing different arms, and not distinctly traceable to the same stock.

But to proceed at once to the immediate ancestors of the subject of this Memoir :—George, fifth Earl of Caithness, conveyed, in 1596 and 1603, the lands of Ulbster to Patrick Sinclair, whom, in both grants, he designates his cousin. Dying without issue, Patrick was succeeded by his brother John, styled Master (*Magister*), a title of honour peculiar in those times to professional scholars. To this learned gentleman the same earl renews the former grants, “ for the particular love and favour that he bears towards his cousin, Master John Sinclair of Ulbster.” \* This charter was confirmed by the Crown in 1616.

To trace the genealogy of the Ulbster family from this remote period is unnecessary, and would be tedious. I may, however, mention, that alliances for several generations were formed by them with the most respectable families in the north of Scotland, and additions made successively to their patrimonial estates. Among the most distinguished were John Sinclair of Brims, who served during the Thirty Years’ War in the Swedish army ; and Sir George

\* In the history of the Drummond family, collected by the first Viscount Strathallan in 1681, there is the following entry regarding Mr John’s first wife :—“ Jean Cheesholm, daughter of Alexander Cheesholm, person of Comrie, was married to Mr John Sinclair, laird of Ulbster in Catnes, a neare kinsman to the Earle of Cathness. She did beare to him Patrick Sinclair, who succeeded,” &c.

Sinclair of Clyth, who represented the county of Caithness in the Scottish Parliament for many years previous to the Union—a measure which he decidedly opposed. Before, however, the terms of it were finally arranged, he died, leaving no issue.\* A singular illustration of strong feudal prejudice is afforded in two instances by the Ulbster family. In both cases, two brothers of different generations, holding separate properties, settled them, by mutual agreement, upon each other. And, in the latter of these cases, the surviving brother, actuated by this feudal spirit, entailed his whole estate upon his cousin, the heir-male, passing over the families of no less than seven sisters, all of whom were honourably connected by marriage.

John Sinclair of Ulbster, grandfather to the subject of these Memoirs, purchased, in 1719, the greater portion of the estates constituting the earldom of Caithness. His descendants, in consequence of this purchase, became hereditary sheriffs and chamberlains of the county.† By a singular contract with the inhabitants of Wick, he acquired the hereditary superiority of that burgh, empowering him to choose the magistrates from a list annually presented to him.

\* Although the name of Sir George occurs in various deeds of his time, his rank, whether that of knight or baronet, is not specified except in one document, where it is remarkable that both titles are given him.

† On the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in Scotland, his son claimed the sum of L.5000.

In 1714, he married Henrietta Brodie, sister to the Lord Lyon of Scotland. By her he had five children, of whom George, the eldest, succeeded him in 1736.

George Sinclair of Ulbster, father to the venerated individual whose history I am about to give, was educated in England. He studied for some time at a private academy kept by the celebrated Dr Watts at Newington, near London. He completed his education at Utrecht ; and, while resident at the University, received intelligence of the death of his father, and his consequent accession to the family estates.\*

\* On that occasion, the letter of advice written to him by his venerable instructor was no less worthy of Dr Watts, than honourable to his pupil :—

“ Newington, near London,  
“ Oct. 13, 1736.

“ SIR,

“ It was by Mr C. I was informed that, while you were pursuing your studies at Utrecht, the Providence of God had deprived you of a father, and, by giving into your hands so considerable an estate, had made you entirely governor of yourself, and of all your affairs. It was also from the same hand I was informed and received a particular account of those Christian virtues that were blooming in your youthful years ; of your serious and religious temper and spirit ; of your diligence and delight in learning for the improvement of your mind ; of the growing and joyful hopes which your friends have conceived of you. Those tidings gave a gladness to my heart, while in many families of the gentry both in North and South Britain we see nothing but woful degeneracy from the piety and virtue of their ancestors. Now, can you take it

Having completed his education at a foreign university, according to a custom not unfrequent among Scotsmen in those times, the young laird of Ulbster made a tour on the continent, in company with the

ill of me, sir, who have the honour of a little acquaintance with you, to endeavour to encourage your pious resolutions, and confirm your love of religion and goodness? Perhaps there are some of your acquaintances, who are themselves vain and sensual, who impute all your virtues to your minority, and your being under restraint and government. Now is your time, sir, to assume courage for God's sake, and make it appear, to their great mortification, that your religion is not owing to any prejudices of your childhood, nor to any providential restraints; but that the seeds of piety are sown deep in your heart, and have taken deep root there; that, upon the manly principles of rational conviction and judgment, you dare profess yourself a Christian, and maintain that profession with zeal and steadiness of soul, and with a holy uniformity in the conduct of your life.

“ The temptations within us, and without us, are many. The powers of appetite and passion in younger years are generally strong and violent. The multitude of evil counsellors and evil companions that may court your acquaintance in your present circumstances, will all unite their forces to divert your heart from God, and ruin your eternal hopes. Dear sir, let the advice of your blessed Saviour ever dwell with you; ‘ watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.’ Maintain an awful sense of the eye of God upon your heart, and all your ways, and be ever jealous of such company as give a loose to their inclinations in the pursuit of forbidden pleasures.

“ In the early part of life we are apt to be too sensibly impressed with the ridicule of the world. We are afraid and ashamed to run counter to the fashions of the age, be they ever so vicious. May the grace of God defend your heart with genuine courage, and guard you against all such weakness.

Earl of Sandwich (afterwards first Lord of the Admiralty), Lord President Dundas, and other distinguished characters of that day. Returning to Scotland he married Lady Janet Sutherland, daughter of William Lord Strathnaver, who, had he outlived his father, would have been seventeenth Earl of Sutherland. By this marriage Mr Sinclair had twelve children, of whom only five survived him, namely,—John, my late father; James, who entered the army, but died young, and three daughters.\*

Mr Sinclair retained the sentiments of consistent piety, the seeds of which in early life had been implanted by Dr Watts. His conduct with respect to public as well as private exercises of devotion was more exemplary than I fear can be recorded of many

May the books of the New Testament, the Psalms of David, and the wise Proverbs of Solomon his son, be the rules of your conduct, the assistants of your devotion, and the life of your spirit. May the providence of God guide and determine all your affairs for you. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy steps; Prov. iii. 6. I shall always be glad to hear of your advancement in wisdom and happiness. May your present behaviour in the world make it appear that youth and piety are no strangers to each other, and in your following years of life, may you be an ornament to our religion, and an honour to your native country. Grace and peace be with you.—I am, sir, your faithful and humble servant,

“ISAAC WATTS.”

\* Of these, Helen was married to Colonel Alexander Campbell, of Barcaldine; Mary, to James Home Rigg, of Morton, Esq.; and Janet, to the Hon. Lord Polkemmet, one of the Senators of the College of Justice in Scotland.

in his rank of life at that time. He lived on terms of friendly intercourse with Dr Blair, Principal Robertson, and other cotemporaries of high literary eminence. A form of prayer found among his papers after his decease shows, that from some latent symptoms of disease, he anticipated sudden death, and made it a subject of daily petition "to be always on his watch-tower, that when God was pleased to call him, he might be ready to answer." The event happened as he foreboded. On the morning of August 29, 1770, he was found lying on the floor of his apartment in a fit of apoplexy, which carried him off within two days.

The guardians of his young family appointed by the will of the deceased, were Lord Auchinleck (father of James Boswell the biographer), the Hon. General Mackay, and Sir Adam Fergusson, Bart. But he well estimated the worth of his highly gifted widow, by leaving them chiefly to her charge. Providentially for them the piety of Lady Janet, her energy and sagacity, and her talents even for those details of business usually regarded as the exclusive province of the other sex, enabled her to discharge with vigour and efficiency her arduous office. A large estate was committed to her superintendence: it was ill cultivated, minutely subdivided, and burdened with heavy debts. But the resources of her mind were equal to the difficulties of her situation. She knew the value of every farm on the estate, together with

the character and the circumstances of every tenant. She was even a match for that shrewdness of which the world has generally ascribed so liberal a portion to northern minds.

As many peculiarities in the disposition and habits of my father may be traced to the guardianship of Lady Janet, I may be permitted to introduce one or two traditionary anecdotes, illustrative of her character and times. Her circumstances, as we have seen, required the exercise of rigid economy, but in her this virtue was no impediment to Christian beneficence. She was beloved while she was revered by her people, who felt that her benefactions were not extorted by their importunity, but dictated by her own good sense and kindly feeling. An amusing misappropriation of her alms was occasionally related to her friends by Lady Janet herself. While residing in the Canon-gate, a well-known resort of respectable Dowagers in former days, she was one morning importuned by a pedlar to purchase a handsome dress. She admired the article, but rejected it as too expensive. Shortly afterwards a note from her friend Lady —— requested of her the loan, or more properly the gift, of a sum of money for some pressing emergency. My good-natured grandmother complied with the request, but what was her surprise, and perhaps mortification, to see her friend next day attired and promenading in the very dress, about which she had herself, only the day before, exercised so much laudable self-denial.

I have already mentioned the popularity of Lady Janet with her dependents. Their confidence in her regard for them was not misplaced. On some points, especially of matrimony, it extended to a degree which we might pronounce divertingly eccentric. She was sensitively anxious that each of her female domestics should find a suitable husband and protector. On one occasion during a serious illness, being under some alarm for her own life, she gave her maid some salutary parting advice; and, among other admonitions, pressed upon her the necessity of being married. The young woman, no doubt astonished at the introduction of such a subject, confessed that she had already entered into an engagement of the kind, but was prevented from completing it by a "little hindrance." "And what is that?" said her mistress. "Only just, my Leddy, that the man is married already, and his wife is not dead yet, but they tell me she is dying." Lady Janet was satisfied, and expressed the comfort she had received from this interesting communication.

Notwithstanding eccentricities of this kind, which, I may observe, had generally a benevolent tendency, some idea of the respect which this really superior woman inspired among her northern neighbours, may be gathered from another story which she sometimes related. She happened to be directress of an assembly given at Edinburgh, while the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland held their session. A simple-



mined gentleman in the north, no doubt as little conversant with ecclesiastical affairs as with the nature of the fashionable meeting over which her Ladyship was to preside, addressed a letter of business to "The Right Hon. Lady Janet Sinclair, Moderator of the General Assembly, Canongate, Edinburgh."

This simple correspondent did not mistake in supposing that her Ladyship took real interest in the welfare of the Scottish establishment, and the efficiency of its ministers. The autograph is now before me of her letter to a young clergyman, Mr Nicholson, whom her son had recently appointed to the parochial charge of Thurso. It is characterised by a deep sense of the responsibilities belonging both to patron and incumbent.\*

\* *Lady Janet Sinclair to the Rev. P. Nicholson.*

" SIR,

" The letter I enclose you from my son will fully explain his intention of bestowing on you the church of Thurso. I pray to Almighty God that you may be enabled to discharge the important duties of a minister of Christ faithfully, as one that must give an account of the precious souls committed to you. Be diligent in the discharge of your duty, circumspect in your conduct, that your precepts may be supported by your example, and both uniting may occasion a reform of practice in the parish, which is much wanted. I cannot omit recommending it as a duty incumbent on you regularly to catechise the town of Thurso, and all the English and Irish inhabitants of the parish. Your youth and inexperience suggest to me these hints to be necessary ; and I look upon the choice of a patron as in some measure rendering him answerable for consequences. God forbid he should have cause to repent his making choice of you ;

Lady Janet attained nearly her seventieth year, and had the happiness to see her son rise to distinction as an author and a statesman. Her last letter, written to him in the immediate prospect of death, manifests at once the high endowments of her understanding, and the amiable qualities of her heart. I may insert it here, to prevent any future interruption of the narrative.

*Lady Janet Sinclair to John Sinclair, Esq.*

“ 9th June, 1783.

“ MY DEAR SON,

“ Before this can be delivered to you, I shall have bid a final adieu to this vain world, to all its concerns, and all my connexions in it. The death of an affectionate parent will naturally affect a son of your sensibility. I earnestly pray Almighty God to grant his choicest blessings on you, my dear son, your amiable wife, and promising children. May you always endeavour to serve God faithfully, and to worship him with reverence: may religion and virtue be the rule of all your actions; and suffer not the temptations or allurements of a vain world to make you swerve from your duty.

“ My settlement, of date 1776, which will accompany the contrary, I hope you will exert yourself to promote the cause of religion, and follow the precepts of your great master, at whose awful tribunal you and I must make our account.

“ 1st November, 1785.”

pany this, will give a striking proof of my attachment to you and yours. May the blessing of God accompany it. Your sisters I recommend to your affectionate attention. I hope they will merit it. Mrs Campbell has a large family, which she will find it difficult to educate and provide for. Mrs Rigg is, happily, married to a good husband, and is in great affluence. My dear Jessy is happy under your and Mrs Sinclair's protection. I hope you will be a father to them all.

“ As to your own concerns, I entreat you to observe economy, and beware of impositions. Reside as much in Caithness as possible, and do not trust too much to the management of others in the conducting of your affairs. You'll find few to trust. Self-interest with some, popularity with others, you'll have to encounter. Even my long experience was not proof against their arts. Keep short accounts with those you employ in every capacity, and do as much of your own business and affairs as possible yourself.

“ I don't approve of setting large tacks \* to tacksmen. They often oppress the poor people under them.

“ To be in debt is a most disagreeable situation to be placed in. To contract it is easy, but how very difficult to repay! It lessens one's importance,

\* Farms.

chagrins the temper, and ruins a family. Beware of cautionary, and engagements for others.

“ I have had a variety of trials and afflictions in life, with malice unprovoked, disrespect, and indifference. These I did not merit or resent, and I now forgive.

“ Adieu, my dearest son, till we meet in another world, as I trust, in the mercy of God, and through the merits of an all-sufficient Saviour, that we shall meet in a state of bliss and endless happiness, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. May you and yours be happy. God bless all my dear children, prays your affectionate mother,

“ JANET SINCLAIR.”

The subject of these Memoirs received his elementary education at Edinburgh. It was a custom at that time for the Magistrates to examine publicly the reading-schools of the city in the public concert-room, afterwards St Mary's Chapel, at the foot of Niddry Wynd. Each scholar, according to his abilities, recited some striking passage in prose or verse. My father, at six years of age, made his appearance before this civic auditory. The late Countess of Kelly, above half a century afterwards, had a vivid recollection of him pouring forth from the orchestra the philippic of Adherbal addressed to the Roman Senate against Jugurtha, and accom-

plishing his task with such vigour and animation as to draw from the good-natured assembly a decided opinion that the young orator would become in time "a great man." He was afterwards sent to the High School, which has been the nursery of many eminent characters. He soon rose to be the head of Mr Farquhar's class, but was afterwards removed to Caithness, where his father had resolved to reside for some time. It was while his parents were preparing for this journey northwards that the Reverend Mr Logan, on the recommendation of Dr Blair, was chosen for his private tutor. The speech and manners of this delightful poet and eminent divine were not so polished as his diction. Lady Janet was apprehensive that her son might catch, in some degree, the rusticity and uncouthness of his talented preceptor, and stated to Dr Blair her anxiety to place her son in other hands. The accomplished professor of rhetoric, however, took a different view of the matter. "Your Ladyship," said he, "in selecting a tutor for your son, should prefer a scholar to a dancing-master."

While the family were on this northern journey an event occurred which illustrates the facetiousness of Logan. The Laird of Ulbster, as his party was numerous, and the roads through Sutherland and the adjoining counties were in those days almost impassable, was obliged to employ two carriages, the heaviest of them drawn by six horses. When the

.

cavalcade reached Kinross, the natives gathered round in crowds to gaze upon it, and requested the tutor to inform them who was travelling in such state. Logan affected a suspicious reluctance to give an answer, but at last took aside some respectable bystander, and, after enjoining secrecy, whispered to him, pointing to the Laird, " You observe a portly, stout gentleman, with gold lace upon his clothes? that is (but it must not be mentioned to mortal) the great Duke William of Cumberland; he is going north *incog.* to see the field of Culloden once more." This news was, of course, spread, and brought the whole population to catch a glimpse of the hero.

On the return of my father from Caithness to Edinburgh, in the following year, he was again placed in Mr Farquhar's class at the High School, where his endeavours to resume his former station were painfully unsuccessful—a disappointment which, in after life, he often quoted as a proof that private education, even under the ablest tutor, must yield to the advantages of a public school.

The subsequent embarrassments of poor Logan afford a powerful example of that improvidence too often the fatal attendant on genius. I am glad to find, from my father's papers, that he took an early, and, I trust, a beneficial interest in the fortunes of his gifted tutor. The sermons of Logan, now so popular, were published originally by subscription, in aid of which the exertions of his pupil were unre-

mitting. He solicited his political friends, then high in office, to purchase divinity, which perhaps they never read, and obtained a promise from Warren Hastings to provide for the author's nearest relatives.\*

Mr Sinclair entered the University of Edinburgh at the early age of thirteen. That distinguished seminary was then in the zenith of its scientific and literary fame. At the head of the College was Robertson the historian; Moral Philosophy was taught by Ferguson, Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres by Blair, Mathematics by Matthew Stewart (the father of Dugald, the great metaphysician), Medicine by Cullen and Gregory. The young student first attended the lectures of Professor George Stuart, teacher of the Latin, or, as it is styled in Scottish Universities, the *Humanity* class. The Professor was much pleased with the early talent and proficiency of his pupil, and lived to congratulate him on their full developement in after life. A letter written towards the close of the last century, congratulates Sir John Sinclair on his "various and manly efforts for the real interest

\* The history of criticism has preserved to us nothing more curious than the judgment of eminent men on the works of their cotemporaries. The following passage in a letter from Dr Blair to my father has an air of condescending patronage towards a writer whom some may regard as equal, some as superior to the Professor himself:—"The sermons," he says, alluding to Logan's publication, "I hope will turn to account, and they are likely, I think, to be popular and acceptable."  
—26th December, 1789.

and honour of his country ;” adding, that, “ while others were pursuing selfish interests or empty trifles, he was employed on labours which would transmit his name with honour to posterity.”

In addition to his classical studies, my father, while he remained at Edinburgh, attended lectures in logic, natural philosophy, and rhetoric. As an assistance to the students of rhetoric in the formation of a correct style, Dr Blair used to make them analyse critically the compositions of some standard writer. He chose for this purpose, the “ Spectators” of Addison, as among the most perfect models of English diction. When the Professor approved of the remarks offered to him in this way, it was his custom to introduce them into a lecture which he delivered to the class in the course of the Session. Upon reading over this lecture in the doctor’s printed works, my father was amused and gratified to find several of his own juvenile criticisms.

After four years of study at Edinburgh, Mr Sinclair removed to Glasgow, chiefly that he might attend the lectures of John Millar, Professor of civil law in that city. This professorship had in former times been almost a sinecure. The occupant of the chair had lectured in Latin, and of course to empty benches. Four students were looked upon as a numerous class. Mr Millar’s predecessor had abolished this antiquated usage, and Millar himself adopted further methods to render his lectures attractive. The instructions of



this eminent jurist were ever after acknowledged by Mr Sinclair with gratitude, and a huge quarto volume on the pandects, remains an evidence of his industry and application. His residence in a great commercial city gave opportunities of learning, both from personal observation, and from intercourse with intelligent merchants, the details of commerce ; a species of acquirement which is rarely found united with University education, and which proved highly useful to him in parliamentary life.

During his residence at Glasgow, my father made his first literary efforts. An anonymous writer, signing himself Mercator Caledonius, had written letters in the Caledonian Mercury, lamenting the hard usage endured by the Highland tenantry from their landlords, in being forced, by exorbitant rents, to abandon their native country, and emigrate to the wilds of America. My father, then in his sixteenth year, conceived that this author aspersed the Highland proprietors unjustly, and resolved to answer him, adopting for that purpose the signature of Julius Cæsar. These juvenile productions excited some attention at the time ; and it naturally gratified the author to hear them in conversation made the subject of frequent remark.

His attendance on the lectures of Professor Millar was preparatory to admission into the Faculty of Advocates ; and at the close of the Professor's course, he returned to Edinburgh for the completion of his

juridical acquirements. It was the practice very generally at that time for gentlemen altogether independent of professional emolument, to study for the Scottish bar, in order to become acquainted with legal forms, and thus enabled to take a share in the business of their respective counties. Other students also who had no expectation of practice, became members of the faculty, in the hope of an appointment eventually to some of the numerous and respectable offices to which the gown is a necessary passport. To acquire readiness in speaking, the young civilians had long formed themselves into debating clubs, where essays were read, and questions of all kinds, both political and literary, submitted to free discussion. Many of the orators, statesmen, and philosophers most renowned in modern British history have been trained in these rhetorical gymnasia. I need only write the names of Stewart, Mackintosh, Horner, Russell, Jeffrey, Lansdowne, and Brougham. In 1772, Mr Sinclair became a member of the select and speculative societies, having men for his cotemporaries most of whom have now passed away, while the few who have survived retain scarcely a reminiscence of the parties once supported or assailed by them with all the fire of youthful rivalry. No plan of study could be more laborious than that which Mr Sinclair adopted previous to his examination for the bar. That his reading might be free from all interruption, he took lodgings at Dalkeith, a small town six miles from

Edinburgh, where he made the following arrangement of his time :—

Sleep,	.	.	.	7	hours.
Dressing,	.	.	.	0½	..
Meals and relaxation,	.	.	.	2½	..
Exercise,	.	.	.	2	..
Study,	.	.	.	12	..
				<hr/>	
				24	

The valuable treatise on Scotch law, by Erskine, the Blackstone of Scotland, was my father's great authority. The first edition of that work was an octavo, the second, much enlarged, a folio. Mr Sinclair had his octavo edition interleaved, and filled up the blank pages with all the additional matter from the folio. The success of his studies was commensurate with his energy and perseverance. He accumulated so large a fund of professional knowledge, that, when he passed the usual preliminary ordeal, his examiners all concurred in anticipating success to him at the bar. One in particular, struck with the correct and ready answers of the young candidate, exclaimed, "I believe you know more of the subject than any one of us."

It was while Mr Sinclair was carrying on his study of the law that the death of his father, as I have already mentioned, put him in possession of his family estate. Aged friends and relatives, whose natural sa-

gacity had been quickened by long acquaintance with the world, now interposed a copious supply of those moral commonplaces and shrewd maxims of worldly policy, with which young heirs are usually assailed by guardians and seniors. Curious specimens of this kind of hortatory composition are now before me. A fearful list is there drawn up before the eye of the youthful laird of "wily lawyers," "crafty usurers," "dashing gamesters," and "young ladies just come out," seconded by "mothers, aunts, cronies, and cousins," all united in conspiracy against him.

From this period Mr Sinclair continued to improve his opportunities of instruction at Edinburgh, but regularly spent his summers in Caithness, where, with great spirit, he commenced agricultural improvements, particularly on the farm adjoining the family mansion. "The public road," he says in his private memoranda, "went diagonally across my finest fields, and I was anxious to make it straight, that they might be properly cultivated. This alteration, however, could not be effected without the consent of the neighbouring proprietors, which, owing to ancient feuds, as well as recent jealousies, my mother assured me I had not the smallest prospect of obtaining; but I resolved on making the attempt, and invited them all to Thurso Castle to show them my proposed line, and solicit their consent to its adoption. They came accordingly, and to Lady Janet's utter amazement, at once agreed unanimously to my proposal. This cir-

cumstance gave me an early impression of the happy influence exerted by attention and civility."

This success led to an experiment in road making on a larger scale. Mr Sinclair used every exertion to enforce in his neighbourhood the statute labour of six days in the year on the roads. This resource provided by law being considered utterly inadequate to any satisfactory result, had never been tried. One great bugbear was the hill of Ben Cheilt, in the centre of Caithness, over which it was imagined that the whole statute labour of the country could not make a road. The question was often asked incredulously of the young proprietor, "When, with all your improvements, will you show us a road over Ben Cheilt?" To conquer this implied impossibility, my father, at the age of eighteen, resolved to make a great exertion. He examined the ground in person, caused the whole to be lined out, fixed a day of meeting, and assembled all the neighbouring farmers, with their servants, to the number of 1260. To each division of this multitude was assigned a separate spot, where they found tools and provisions. They began to work at dawn of day, and continued their labours until a road, which had been hardly passable for horses in the morning, became practicable for carriages before night. Some English strangers happening to be present, were heard to declare that they had never witnessed a more gratifying scene.

One more occasion may be mentioned, when Mr

Sinclair showed the rising energy of his character. His ancestors, as I have already mentioned, had acquired the right of superiority over the burgh of Wick, the county town : and in virtue of that right, he possessed a veto on the election of the provost and baillies. Considering the minority of their superior a favourable opportunity for an invasion of his rights, certain malecontents in the burgh and neighbourhood had recourse to intimidation, offering various insults to himself and his adherents. These outbreakings of local violence were met by proper firmness on the part of the young proprietor. He resolved that no concession should be wrung from him by threats ; he sent a special summons to his own tenantry and those of his surrounding friends ; and assembling an array of 1200 persons, overawed the disaffected burghers so completely, that they abandoned their design of interrupting the election. From this affair Mr Sinclair received a lesson which he never afterwards forgot. " One of the leaders in these disturbances," he says in his private memoranda, " informed me that he was exasperated to oppose me by my neglect in not answering a letter. I was thence induced never to fall again into the same error."

In November 1774, Mr Sinclair entered at Lincoln's Inn, and occasionally kept terms till the year 1782, when he was called to the English bar. Anxious, mean while, to complete his education for public life, and rightly judging that at an English University

there was more likelihood of forming acquaintance with the future actors in the political drama, he matriculated as a gentleman commoner at Trinity College, on the 26th of January, 1775. He at first resided in his College; but afterwards took lodgings at the house of Mr Ireland, a respectable medical practitioner, originally from Stirling, in North Britain. The good-humoured facetiousness, and strong national attachments of this gentleman, made him a general favourite at the University; especially among the Scottish gownsmen, to whose hilarity on St Andrew's day, he was for upwards of half a century a large contributor. He may possibly be still well known to the youngest Oxonians, who may observe him to this very day in the same well-powdered queue, the same golden-headed cane, the same light-brown single-breasted coat, with lace ruffles at the wrists, the same light-coloured silk stockings, and the same knee breeches with silver buckles, in which, on a visit, more than half a century ago to his native country, he was represented by Dighton in the well-known caricature of "Ireland in Scotland."

Of my father's academical associates, little can be ascertained at this distant period, especially as his residence at Oxford was not of long duration. There were two under-graduates, however, of his time, with both of whom he formed a friendship of many years continuance, namely, Mr North, eldest son of the

prime minister, and Viscount Maitland (now Earl of Lauderdale).

Having completed a laborious and diversified education, Mr Sinclair proposed to enlarge his knowledge by foreign travel. For the present, however, the plan was interrupted by a matrimonial negotiation. During a short residence at Stoke Newington, near London, he became attached to Sarah, daughter of Alexander Maitland, Esq., a gentleman of Scotch extraction. As this young lady was heiress to a considerable fortune, and had been carefully educated, the candidates for her hand were numerous; and the young laird of Ulbster, notwithstanding a handsome person and accomplished manners, had less prospect of success from the remoteness of his paternal domains, situated as they were in those recesses of the north, which English prejudice once placed beyond the pale of comfort, refinement, and civilisation. A curious circumstance determined the contest in his favour. One of his rivals had taken an excursion to the Highlands, and, after proceeding as far as Inverness, was recalled unexpectedly to England. On his return, he explained to the ladies at Stoke Newington his disappointment at having been unable to complete his tour. He had heard, he said, of a young gentleman in Caithness, named Sinclair, who appeared to be an extraordinary character; and was carrying on improvements in that country with an energy never before heard of. Twelve hundred men had



been assembled in one day, to make a road over a hill which had been looked upon as impassable, and plans for introducing commerce and manufactures, and for advancing agriculture, were in daily progress under the auspices of this hyperborean improver. This encomium proved unfortunate for the good-natured eulogist. His competitor rose, at his expense, in the young lady's estimation. Mr Sinclair's proposal was accepted, the marriage-contract drawn up, and nothing more required than to name the day ; but Mrs Maitland felt insuperable repugnance to the removal of her daughter from her own neighbourhood, and insisted on a promise from her future son-in-law, that he would reside permanently in England. To this condition, public spirit withheld him from consenting ; and as he now considered the engagement broken off, he resumed his plan of an excursion to the Continent.

In this short tour he was accompanied by his younger brother James, a lieutenant in the army, who was in bad health, and for whose recovery a residence in a southern climate had been prescribed. To this his first journey on the Continent, little reference occurs either in my father's papers, or printed works. In a letter to Lady Janet on his way through Calais, the germ may be found of that zeal for the culture of waste lands, which afterwards ripened into such extensive usefulness throughout his life. " The commons we passed through in Kent," he says, " are neither agreeable to the eye, nor of use to the people

they belong to. I could not help regretting that the English law, beautiful as it is in many other particulars, should be so averse to the division of this dormant property, as to deprive the present generation of all hopes to see a great part of their country under cultivation." From Calais, the brothers proceeded to Paris, and from thence to Dijon. The natural character of the peasantry, gay, frank, and good-humoured, added much to the pleasure of the journey. This harmless joviality was a very different kind of feeling from that frantic merriment which must now be inseparably associated in the minds of my readers with the horrors of the revolution. At a small village in Burgundy, the lieutenant observing some grotesque figures at the inn, burst into immoderate laughter, in which his brother loudly joined him. A Burgundian bystander, instead of resenting the mirth enjoyed at the expense of his countrymen, exclaimed, with some point and great pleasantry; "J'aime cette jolie musique." It will be in the recollection of my father's friends, that when any ludicrous incident or observation called forth a peal of laughter, he seldom failed to repeat the saying of his Burgundian friend; "J'aime cette jolie musique."

The travellers, on arriving at Avignon, dined at the *table d'hôte*, where Mr Sinclair found himself seated next a grave gentleman in a Spanish cloak, by whom, after some conversation in French, he was surprised to find himself addressed in a broad Scotch

accent. Mutual felicitations naturally ensued, and attracted the notice of the French gentleman presiding, who, being informed that it was an unforeseen rencontre of Scotsmen, requested silence, and addressing Mr Sinclair, said :—" We rejoice, sir, to hear that you and your companion are Scotsmen. On the expulsion of the Stuarts, a number of their partisans settled in this town and neighbourhood, where they have left descendants, much esteemed, and proud of their extraction. We are delighted in the opportunity of showing attention to the natives of your country. They will always find a cordial welcome at Avignon." He then gave from the chair the toast — " Success to Scotland, and the Scottish people."

From Avignon our tourists proceeded to Aix in Provence, where the climate proved colder than in Scotland at the same season. In this district, to which they had resorted for its warm temperature, Mr Sinclair met with an accident hardly ever heard of in his own country. He was so severely frost-bitten that he suffered long after from the effects of it. But a far greater affliction arose from the rigour of the climate—his brother's complaints at this place were so much aggravated as to cause death.

On his return from this short excursion, Mr Sinclair learnt, with equal surprise and satisfaction, that Miss Maitland did not approve, as he had supposed, of the arbitrary stipulation made by her mother. He

intimated his readiness to renew his addresses, a favourable answer was returned, and the marriage solemnized on the 26th March, 1776.

Mr and Mrs Sinclair, after their marriage, retired to the family mansion at Thurso, an old castellated building, erected by George, sixth Earl of Caithness. This singular edifice stands upon a rock so close to the Pentland Frith that the spray from the sea in stormy weather passes over the roof.\* By some whimsical perverseness in the architect, or a want of taste in the noble founder, almost all the windows at that time faced a court-yard surrounded with high walls, being turned aside, in contempt, as it should seem, of the magnificent marine views which would have formed the best apology for the choice of situation. The garden was five miles distant from the house, and, from the badness of the road, was nearly inaccessible. Not a tree nor hedge-row appeared in all the neighbourhood, and the enclosures were divided only by dykes or walls of rough stone. The

\* Lord Byron, who was a schoolfellow at Harrow of the present Sir George Sinclair, intending to visit him at Thurso Castle, stipulated that there should be good fish, and a rubber at whist. Sir George might have promised that, had the lameness of the poet been even greater than it was, he might have procured his favourite delicacy with his own hands, as fish have been caught with a rod from the drawingroom window. Byron's marriage, unfortunately for Caithness, prevented the visit. The bold coast scenery, and wild traditions of this remote district would probably have elicited some splendid scintillations of his romantic genius.

soil was rich, considering the barren aspect of the scene, but Mr Sinclair took less pride in the fecundity of the land than of the water. He used to mention, with great triumph, that on one occasion he presented some southern visitors with twenty-four kinds of fish, and that the fishermen regretted having had but one day's notice, otherwise they would have supplied a greater quantity, declaring that forty different species might be collected in the neighbouring rivers, lakes, and bays. In the river Thurso, salmon are so abundant, that in a memorable instance two thousand five hundred and sixty were caught in a single net.\*

\* *On the celebrated draught of salmon in the river Thurso*: —“ In the preceding Statistical Account, chap. ii. sect. 1, mention was made of the celebrated draught of salmon in the river of Thurso, when no less a number than 2560 were caught. That circumstance has been often mentioned, but seemed incredible to many who were not acquainted with the circumstances attending that event. With a view of having the fact ascertained, the following certificate was given by three persons who witnessed the transaction, and are of unquestioned veracity.

“ We, George Paterson, now bailie of Thurso, George Swanson, shoemaker there, and Donald Finlayson, senior, fisher there, do hereby certify and declare, That upon the 23d day of July, old style, we think in the year 1743 or 1744, there were caught, at one haul, in the cruive pool, upon the water above the town of Thurso, *two thousand five hundred and sixty salmon*. These fish were caught by a large net, beginning the sweep at the cruives, and coming down the stream to a stem at the low end of the pool. The net was carried down the water by from eighteen to twenty men, with long poles in their hands keeping down the ground rope, and the fish were

The finest object in the vicinity of Thurso is an isolated rock called the Clett, far exceeding in grandeur Shakspeare's celebrated cliff at Dover. It rises perpendicularly to a stupendous height out of the deep, within a few yards of Holborn-head—a bold promontory opposite the castle; and is the undisturbed retreat of innumerable sea-fowl.

Not far from the Castle stands Harold's Tower, a modern building, erected by Mr Sinclair, both for the sake of ornament to the country and of utility as a sea mark. The idea of this building was first suggested to my father by an eccentric antiquary, Alexander Pope, minister of Reay. This old gentleman had witnessed with horror the sacrilegious spoliation of an ancient chapel, the burying-place of Harold, Earl of Caithness, who had fallen in battle fighting against Norwegian invaders. The minister presented a petition in the name of the fallen chief, craving protection for his remains, and animadverting on the negligence which had allowed his mausoleum to be

afterwards taken ashore by degrees in a smaller net. Each man got a fish and some whisky for his trouble. We farther certify and declare that we were personally present when these fish were caught.

‘ GEORGE PATERSON.

GEORGE SWANSON.

his

DONALD D. + F. FINLAYSON,  
mark.

“ ‘ Thurso, 23d August 1792.’ ”

—*Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. xx.

pulled to pieces, and its fragments profanely built into enclosures for the surrounding fields.\*

In the old castle we have been describing, Mr Sinclair kept up the system of feudal hospitality. Every gentleman of the county, and every stranger, found a welcome at his table, though sometimes it was alleged, after his appearance in political life, that sufficient discrimination was not observed between the reception given to friends and foes. A freeholder in the

\* The following is the curious document referred to :—

“ Know, sir, that I was slain in battle about the year 1190, near your park of Kirkwall, which has its denomination from an elegant chapel built above my grave in the said park. The stones of my chapel are now carried away, and built in your enclosures about that ground. I had once a right to the half of Orkney and Zetland from the King of Norway, and a right to the half of Caithness from King William, the Lyon of Scotland. I had also an estate in Sutherland, where I was born. I lost my life in battle, endeavouring to recover my property, as became a nobleman of spirit, out of the hands of a cruel and daring tyrant, justly called Wicked Earle Harolde; who died ingloriously thereafter, being hanged by order of King William the Lyon, who marched into Caithness at the head of a gallant army, to chastise that daring and bloody tyrant, in the year 1196.

“ Be pleased to enclose my grave in a decent manner, so as not to become the resting-place of animals, or to have my remains ploughed up. My grave is now all my estate, which ought to be held inviolable. By so doing, you will show a noble example to others, to honour the memory of the brave, though unfortunate; you make restitution, as the stones of my chapel are built in your enclosures; you give a caution to others not to violate the sepulchre of the dead; and it will yield you the most manly and sensible pleasure, to have done an action, commendable in itself, and which will perpetuate your memory to posterity.”

opposite interest has been known, in return for hospitable treatment, to rise from his board and vote against him.

During his stay in Caithness at this time, Mr Sinclair employed himself in literary and theological investigations. Among the subjects which occupied his attention, was the authority of the Christian Sabbath. Doubts had occurred to him whether the Sabbathical institution was not a part of the ceremonial law, terminating with the Jewish polity. Some texts in the writings of St Paul, which abrogate the Jewish Sabbath, augmented his anxiety on the subject. He proceeded to collect authorities on this point to the extent of forty or fifty volumes, including many scarce and curious treatises. He arranged his ideas in the form of a tract, entitled "Observations on the Christian Sabbath." He had no idea of weakening the obligation of Christians to attend public worship on the first day of the week ; but he conceived that, after public worship had been attended, other useful employments not strictly religious might be pursued without infringing the Divine law.

The works which fell under the notice of my father on this most important subject belonged, unfortunately, to that lax school of theologians, who, dreading Puritanism even more than profaneness, were unable to preserve the happy medium of Christian moderation and sobriety ; and whose unworthy patronage of King James's book of "Sports and Pastimes" exas-



perated those austere and gloomy tempers which it was designed to subdue. Some excuse, at the same time, for these latitudinarian writers may be found in their disgust at the absurdities maintained by injudicious defenders of the Puritan cause. Heylyn enumerates some "monstrous paradoxes," as he justly terms them, which had been maintained from the pulpit by several of those austere and blinded casuists. "First," says he, "it was preached at a market-town in Oxfordshire, that to do any service-work or business on the Lord's Day was as great a sin as to kill a man, or commit adultery. Secondly, preached in Somersetsshire, that, to throw a bowl on the Lord's Day, was as great a sin as to kill a man. Thirdly, in Norfolk, that, to make a feast or dress a wedding dinner on the Lord's Day, was as great a sin as for a father to take a knife and cut his child's throat. Fourthly, in Suffolk, that to ring more bells than one on the Lord's Day, was as great a sin as to commit murder. —I add," continues Heylyn, "what I once heard myself at Serjeant's Inn in Fleet Street, that temporal death was at this day to be inflicted by the law of God on the Sabbath-breaker; on him that, on the Lord's Day, did the works of his daily calling, with a grave application unto my masters of the law; that if they did their ordinary works on the Sabbath day, in taking fees and giving counsel, they should consider what they did deserve by the law of God." \*

\* Hist. of the Sabbath; Heylyn's Works, p. 490.

In the introduction to his work, Mr Sinclair renounces all authority but that of reason enlightened by Scripture, and guards against the imputation of scepticism or indifference, to which the boldness of his speculations might expose him, by declaring that he “gloried in the name of Christian, and would by no means forfeit so noble an appellation.”

Having completed his lucubrations in a large neatly written quarto manuscript, he, on his return to Edinburgh, submitted them to the revision of his friend Dr Adam Smith. The judgment given on this occasion is memorable, as proceeding from a layman, a profound and independent thinker, and the well-known apologist of David Hume. “Your work is very ably written; but I advise you not to publish it; for, rest assured that the Sabbath, as a political institution, is of inestimable value, independently of its claims to Divine authority.” On this opinion, Mr Sinclair did not hesitate to act. His work was put aside, and the labour of many months sacrificed without scruple, to his regard for the interests of society. It were earnestly to be wished that divines, high in ecclesiastical station, were possessed of the prudence and tender consideration for the public welfare so benevolently exemplified in this instance by the author of the *Wealth of Nations*.

The taste for economical inquiries imbibed in early life by my father, was confirmed by intercourse with Dr Adam Smith, whose acquaintance he had fre-

quent opportunities of cultivating. A few casual reminiscences of the Doctor may here be introduced, which I believe have not hitherto been printed.

Towards the close of the American war, when general despondency seemed to paralyse the nation, Dr Smith, confident in the resources of the country, would not allow himself to despair of the commonwealth. On the news of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, Mr Sinclair hurried to his friend with intelligence of the disaster, insisting that, if affairs went on no better, the nation must be ruined.—“Be assured, my young friend,” replied the imperturbable philosopher, “there is a great deal of ruin in a nation.” Burgoyne, though a weak and unfortunate commander, was an elegant scholar and a plausible reasoner. My father used to say of him, that he was a general “better able to apologize for a defeat than to gain a victory.”

In cases of moral sentiment the worthy Doctor was not so imperturbable. He disliked nothing more than that moral apathy—that obtuseness of moral perception which prevents a man from not only seeing clearly, but feeling strongly, the broad distinction between virtue and vice, and which, under the pretext of liberality, is all-indulgent even to the blackest crimes. At some party where Mr ———, in his mawkish way, was finding palliations for some villainous transaction, the doctor waited in patient silence till he was gone, and then exclaimed, “Now, I

can breathe more freely ; I cannot bear that man ; he has no *indignation* in him."

In Adam Smith there was a large share of that simplicity which so often characterises genius. Dining one day at Dalkeith Palace with his pupil the Duke of Buccleuch, he met, amongst other guests, two sons of Lord Dorchester, who, being merely young men of fashion, were considered by the doctor as unfairly monopolizing the attention both of the noble host and of his company. The conversation seemed to turn entirely upon Lord Dorchester's family, Lord Dorchester's estates, Lord Dorchester's equipage, &c. At length the doctor, turning to the person next him, enquired, in a sufficiently audible whisper, " Pray, who is Lord Dorchester ? I never heard so much of him before."

Most of my readers who have visited Edinburgh must have seen, on the Calton Hill, the monument which the Historian of England chose to erect during his own lifetime in honour of himself, with the brief but pointed inscription, " David Hume." Walking along the North Bridge with Lord Dunmore, Adam Smith pointed with his cane towards the Hill, exclaiming, " I don't like that monument ; it is the greatest piece of vanity I ever saw in my friend Hume."

Among various communications from Dr Smith to my father, I must not omit to notice a holograph letter in six folio pages, commenting on a financial

work which the latter intended to publish, but which has since been lost, or merged in other publications. This document is curious, as few letters in the doctor's own hand are extant. His remarks derive their chief value and significance from their connexion with the manuscript on which they form a commentary. The conclusion of the letter gives some general and interesting maxims on the subject of taxation :—" I dislike all taxes that may affect the necessary expenses of the poor. They, according to different circumstances, either oppress the people immediately subject to them, or are repaid with great interest by the rich ; that is, by their employers, in the advanced wages of their labour. Taxes on the *luxuries* of the poor, upon their beer and other spirituous liquors for example, as long as they are so moderate as not to give much temptation to smuggling, I am so far from disapproving, that I look upon them as the best of sumptuary laws.

" I could write a volume upon the folly and the bad effects of all the legal encouragements that have been given either to the linen manufacture or to the fisheries.—I have the honour to be, with most sincere regard, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

" ADAM SMITH."

Various circumstances have brought suspicion on the religious principles of Dr Adam Smith. His in-

timacy with Hume was not only greater than ordinary courtesy, Christian charity, or literary friendship required; but was of that fraternal character which seemed to intimate coincidence of opinion and identity of sentiment. In the second edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he omitted, on the suggestion, as is supposed, of his sceptical friend, a splendid passage, referred to by Archbishop Magee as among the ablest illustrations of the doctrine of Atonement. In the suspicion thus excited, my father did not participate. He was anxious to think favourably of a venerated friend. Smith himself justified the omission alluded to, not on the ground that the doctrine of Atonement was unfounded, but that the paragraph was unnecessary and misplaced. It is an interesting fact in relation to the religious sentiments of this great philosopher, that when his mother, to whom he always evinced an amiable attachment, was on her deathbed receiving pastoral visits from the minister of her church, her son was regularly present, devoutly joining in prayers offered through the mediation of his Redeemer. Had this pious lady suspected her son of infidelity, such a practice must have given her any thing but satisfaction. Hume, under the same circumstances, could not with decency have attended. Prostrate on his knees, by the bedside of his dying parent, in deprecation of the wrath of God, the author of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* would surely feel the sentiment

revive which he himself had once so forcibly given to the public, but had afterwards so suspiciously recalled; and “rejecting repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, as inadequate, he would confess that some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, must be made for man, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the Divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences.” \*

Shortly before his death, Dr Adam Smith had occasion, under very interesting circumstances, to take leave of his literary friends. Among his favourite places of resort was the Oyster Club—a convivial society, of which Dr Hutton, Dr Black, Dr Adam Ferguson, John Clerk, the naval tactician, Robert Adam, the architect, as well as our philosopher himself, and other eminent characters, were original members. They were nearly of the same age; they had most of them been educated together; and their chief enjoyment consisted in relating the adventures and reviving the associations of their youth. Their rendezvous was at a stabler’s (a second-rate inn) in the Grassmarket; but as the Club became better known, and the numerous candidates for admission became clamorous and troublesome, the place of meeting was often changed with a view to secrecy. The last meetings of the club, which did not long survive the doctor, were chiefly at a small hostelry in the Cow-

\* Abp. Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 210.

gate. Strangers of celebrity were sure to be introduced ; so that the members had the advantage of seeing all the distinguished men who came to Scotland at that period. Among the noted persons added to the Society were Dugald Stewart, Professor Playfair, Sir James Hall, and Lord Daer. For some time before his death, Dr Smith, although he could still enjoy the society of his friends at home, was unable to attend the Oyster Club. One day finding himself somewhat better, he requested that the meeting should be held at Panmure House, his own residence in the Canongate. During supper, when he appeared tolerably well, and when his spirits were enlivened by the conversation of his old associates, one or two others, comparatively strangers, joined the circle, anxious to be present, from the idea that this was probably the last occasion on which the doctor would appear. The interruption seemed to agitate him ; it pained him to be an object of curiosity ; he was unable, in his state of weakness, to recover himself. At last, rising from his seat, he walked towards the door, where he stood for a few moments, and then addressed the company with affectionate plainness :—" My friends, I fear that I must leave this happy meeting, and that I shall never meet you again ; but I trust that we shall all meet hereafter in another and a better world."

In expectation of his death, the doctor, who, like many other eminent men in the same state, was ap-



prehensive of injudicious publication by his surviving friends, caused a great number of manuscripts to be burnt; and, among others, all his lectures on jurisprudence, and a complete course of belles lettres, the latter of which had been particularly admired. It is much to be regretted that he did not live to prepare these works for the press; since he is frequently accused of being more anxious for the material than for the moral and intellectual wealth of nations.

Before proceeding to my father's political life, I may notice two literary works of his previous to the year 1783. One was an historical essay on Addison, in which, without entering into an elaborate criticism on the productions of that accomplished writer, he relates, with a degree of vivacity and even playfulness not in general characteristic of his style, a variety of entertaining anecdotes, both of Addison himself and his co-temporaries. This essay, though not published, was printed and circulated among his friends.

The other work of Mr Sinclair was entitled, "Observations on the Scottish Dialect." He perceived with much regret the inconvenience and disadvantages to which his countrymen, however eminent as speakers and writers, were exposed, when their accent and phraseology came under English cognizance. Even the polished dictum of Hume and Robertson had on this account been subjected occasionally to censure. Tried at the bar of southern criticism, they had been found guilty of *national* barbarisms. A pro-

vincial barbarism is a very obvious and intelligible expression, meaning a word or phrase confined to some narrow district: but that the peculiar phraseology of a whole nation should be condemned as barbarous, could only have arisen from the peculiar situation of Scotland ever since the period of King James' accession to the English throne. "If the two nations," says Dr Robertson, "had continued distinct, each might have retained idioms and forms of speech peculiar to itself; these being rendered fashionable by the example of a court, and supported by the authority of writers of reputation, might have been considered in the same light with the varieties occasioned by the different dialects in the Greek tongue, might have been considered as beauties, and in many cases might have been used promiscuously by the authors of both nations. But by the accession, the English naturally became the sole judges and lawgivers in language, and rejected as solecisms every form of speech to which their ear was not accustomed." \*

Among the first persons who suggested the idea of collecting the peculiarities of the Scottish dialect into a volume, was the great lexicographer of England, who, notwithstanding his Anglican prejudices, did not wish the language of Scotland to fall into oblivion. "He advised me," says Boswell, "to complete a dictionary of words peculiar to Scotland, of which I showed him a specimen." "Sir," said he, "Ray has made

\* Hist. of Scotland, book 8.

a collection of north country words ; by collecting those of your country, you will do a useful thing towards the history of the language." Boswell's work was never completed ; but Hume annexed a collection of Scotticisms to the first edition of his political discourses ;\* Beattie also and Elphinstone published some remarks on the Scottish dialect. These, however, were inadequate guides to Scotsmen in avoiding peculiarities of speech and writing unintelligible or offensive to English ears.

Mr Sinclair, therefore, for his own improvement, and as a help to his countrymen in attaining purity of expression, undertook the labour of collecting the most remarkable words and phrases by which the natives of North Britain usually provoked the censure of their southern neighbours. His object extended certainly beyond that of ordinary grammarians ; for he conceived that by assimilation of language, the familiar intercourse of the Scots and English would be essentially facilitated—national jealousies would die away—and political union be followed by a complete social fusion of the two nations.†

\* Hume had so carefully studied the subject, that he became an accurate censor of compositions by his countrymen. After perusing Dr Reid's enquiry into the human mind, he informs the author, apparently with surprise, that he had detected but one solitary Scotticism in the work, namely, "hindered to do," instead of the more classical expression, "hindered from doing."

† On this performance a foreign critic remarks :—"The subject of the work is philological, but its object political ; for

In the Introduction to his work the author discusses at some length the origin of the Scottish dialect, showing how the ancient Celtic came to be superseded by the Saxon tongue in the southern and eastern counties of Scotland. Under four heads he treats of phrases exclusively Scotch, and of words peculiar to Scotsmen, or employed by Scotsmen in senses different from the English, including verbs, adjectives, nouns, and particles. Under his third head he descends to the minutiae of peculiar idioms connected with entertainments, games, dress, towns, houses, furniture, trades, and occupations. Lastly, he discusses professional phraseology, whether of the law or of the church. While engaged in examining the diversities of expression at the Scotch and English bar, he suggests the utility of consolidating the laws of both countries, quoting for this purpose the authority of Lord Bacon, who, among his political papers, recommends the compilation of a British code of jurisprudence. It is here that my father makes his first allusion to the advantage of codification, a subject which afterwards engrossed so large a portion of his life.

In conclusion, he pointedly remarks on the bar-

it was an attempt to approximate the conversational language of the Scots and English, so that the two nations might be more closely united." See Baron Varnhagen Von Ense in the Berlin Critical Review, June 1831.

barisms of England, which were provincial, and not national, and which, he observes, were quite as numerous as those he had collected in respect to Scotland. He warns his countrymen in particular against the solecisms of which the capital itself exhibited such multiplied and gross examples.

Mr Sinclair's work was much approved by cotemporary critics, as a "useful and ingenious performance, containing the largest collection of Scotticisms that had till then been offered to the public."\* Elphinstone, also, with amusing naïveté and self-complacency, makes the following acknowledgments in his preface to a work on the principles of the English language. "If, upon the whole, the present analogist have executed, in any tolerable degree, his important purpose, the public has to ascribe any benefit thence arising, primarily and ultimately to John Sinclair of Ulbster, Esq., whose ingenuity in the lately published 'Observations on the Scottish dialect,' has been exceeded only by the modesty that made him devolve the prosecution of the patriotic task on the hand which first grasped *the standard* of English analogy, and promulged to London the principles of her speech."

As many of my readers on the other side of the Tweed may not have had opportunities of hearing Scotticisms, and of estimating the value of a work

\* See Critical Review, April 1782.

48 OBSERVATIONS ON THE SCOTTISH DIALECT.

such as I have described, I may subjoin, for their edification, a few examples :—

*Mortification*—From *mort*, death ; an endowment from property available at the death of the testator.

*Flunkie*—A footman ; literally a *sidesman* or attendant *at your flank*.

*Bawbie*—A halfpenny, a supposed corruption of baby, a coin issued in Scotland when King James VI. was a child.

*Stour*—Dust in motion.

*I am moving my house*—I am changing my residence.

*I am quite affronted at your sitting there*—I am shocked, &c.

*Having one gown to wash another*—Having one gown to wear while another is washing.

*Yesterday was a week*—Yesterday se'ennight.

*To-morrow will be a fortnight*—To-morrow fortnight.

*Change your feet, walk into the fire, and don't sit on the door*—  
Change your shoes and stockings, draw close to the fire, and don't sit near the door.

*Come and speak to me*—Come and hear me speak.

*To give a hearing*—To give a lecture or scold.

*On shanksnaggie*—Having your own shanks for your nag.—

*Cocknice*, on the Marrow-bone (Mary-le-bone) stage.

*To condescend upon particulars*—To enter into minutiae.

Among the orators from Scotland who first distinguished themselves in the House of Commons, were Mr Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville, and Mr Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Chancellor and Earl of Roslin. These eminent individuals took entirely opposite courses in regard to their national peculiarities of speech. Wedderburn avoided with the utmost possible care the accent and phraseology of his country ; but it was remarked of him by the best judges, that although he had divested himself of the Scotch accent,

he never attained that of England. Chief Baron Macdonald alleged of him, that he had scarcely any accent at all. On the other hand, Mr Dundas, dreading the least appearance of affectation, chose rather to speak with all the broadness and raciness of his early days, so as to rival even Clerk and Braxfield, in what the author of *Peter's Letters* terms, "the music of the Doric dialect."

In connexion with the above-mentioned Dictionary of Scotticisms, I may mention, that while my father was engaged in it, he was introduced by Boswell to a much higher master in the art of lexicography. Boswell mentions the introduction among his "memorabilia for 1781." "My correspondence with him" (Dr Johnson), "during the rest of this year was, I know not why, very scanty, and all on my side. I wrote him one letter to introduce Mr Sinclair (now Sir John), the member for Caithness, to his acquaintance, and informed him in another that my wife had been affected with alarming symptoms of illness."\*

Dr Johnson resided at that time in Bolt Court, where my father was well received; but he used to say that the roughness of the Doctor's manners, and the closeness of his apartment, left a disagreeable impression upon his mind, and prevented a repetition of his visit. It was not from national resentments that he did not cultivate an acquaintance which he well knew how to value, for he always candidly admitted

\* Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 147.

that Dr Johnson's sarcasms upon Scotland had been as useful as they were severe, and more particularly that his sneers at the dearth of timber had been the means of clothing the nakedness of the land. When he observed trees of recent growth along the route traversed by the Doctor, he would call them "Johnsonian plantations." It was his wish some years since to engage the author of these pages in a life of Johnson, which was to combine all the anecdotes related by the Doctor's numerous biographers. He even sketched out a plan, and amassed for me a quantity of materials which have since been lost : the work happily has fallen into better hands.

From his extensive acquaintance among the personal friends of Dr Johnson, my father, of necessity, possessed a number of anecdotes illustrating his character and opinions ; but the few which had escaped cotemporary writers have nearly all been collected by the diligence of Croker. Of those which I have not yet seen printed, one or two specimens will not here be out of place.

A young friend of my father travelling one night to London by the Devonshire mail, found a talkative old lady by the side of a stout old gentleman in a large wig, whom she tried to engage in conversation, but who discouraged all her attempts by answering in monosyllables. At last she desisted, and the trio journeyed on in silence during the remainder of the night. When morning appeared, the old gentleman



pulled out a small pocket volume, and placing it close to one of his eyes, began to read. His tormentor seized the opportunity to interpose a salutary caution. "Sir," says she, "won't reading with so little light be apt to give you a headache?" Her gruff fellow-passenger replied with a loud voice, "There are some people, Madam, to whom reading always gives an headache." The tone and manner of the speaker could not be mistaken, and the young traveller at once demanded, "Pray, Sir, have I not the honour to be in company with Dr Samuel Johnson?"

When the Doctor, during his Scottish tour, reached St Andrews, he was much put out of humour by observing the dilapidated state of the ancient ecclesiastical and collegiate buildings, formerly among the noblest specimens of Gothic architecture in North Britain. After inspection of the ruins, he dined in company with the professors, to whom he stated, in no measured terms, his indignation at the sight of these neglected monuments, "faithful witnesses," as he termed them, "of the triumph of Reformation." Overawed by the frown of the great English moralist, the professors hardly ventured to open their lips. After a distressing pause, the youngest of them took courage, and expressed a hope that Scotland had answered his expectations. "Sir," replied the Doctor, with great vehemence, "I came here expecting to see savage men and savage manners, and I have not been disappointed."

I may be allowed to add one further anecdote, in which my father took great pleasure. Dr Johnson, descanting upon the bleak and treeless aspect of Aberdeenshire, remarked to a native proprietor, that if he searched his whole county he would not find a single tree older than the Union. “At all events,” replied the Aberdonian, “we have no such era in Scotland as the Conquest.”

## CHAPTER II.

Entrance on Public Life—State of Parties—Speech on the Dutch War—Naval Tracts—St Alban's Club—Mr President Laurens—Change of Ministers—Lord North—Rockingham Administration—Scarcity in Scotland—Highland Dress—Reform in Parliament—Shelburne Administration—Pamphlet on Gibraltar—Coalition—Pamphlets on Finance—Pitt Administration—Westminster Scrutiny—History of the Revenue—Death of Mrs Sinclair—Second Visit to the Continent—Bishop Watson—Baronetcy.

My father was a member of the British Parliament upwards of thirty years, throughout a period the most eventful in the annals of his country, whether we consider the policy of successive governments at home, or our relation to the various powers abroad. At the general election in 1780, when he had attained his twenty-sixth year, he was unanimously chosen to represent his native county. He entered the House of Commons unpledged and independent; he had no personal interests to advance, and no family connexion with any leader of either party. It was a disadvantage to him that Caithness only returned a member to Parliament alternately with Bute, so that his political existence appeared precarious. His first introduction.

was to Lord North, whom, all things considered, he felt called upon to support. He was not insensible to the disasters which the incompetency of that minister and his colleagues had brought upon the kingdom ; their inadequate application to public business, their ignorance of foreign politics, their negligence in not cultivating the friendship of our natural allies, and their lavish expenditure of public money. At the same time, he felt still greater repugnance to unite himself with the Opposition. As a British patriot he disliked their anti-British sentiments and speeches ; he could not tolerate their avowed friendship with the open enemies of England ; he was disgusted to hear the orators of the party magnifying the strength of America, to the disparagement of our own ; calling the American cause “ the cause of liberty,” and designating the American soldiers “ our armies.” It appeared to him highly criminal for British senators publicly to express their exultation, that British troops were perishing ingloriously in the very country which had but yesterday been our own—which we ourselves had called into being, fostered into maturity, and protected, when in danger, to the exhaustion of our own resources. He was also of opinion, that America would concede to Lord North and his colleagues terms of peace more favourable to the honour and interests of Great Britain, than the Opposition, if in power, could, consistently with their former state-

ments and proceedings, have demanded. With these views he intimated to Sir Grey Cooper, who took a leading part in the ministerial business of the House of Commons, that he would have no objection to second the Address at the opening of the Session in 1781. The answer of Lord North was cordial towards the young member, and at the same time betrayed the painful embarrassments under which the government was labouring.

“ Bushy Park, Nov. 13, 1781.

“ Sir,

“ I cannot sufficiently express how much I feel myself obliged to you for the letter you wrote to Sir Grey Cooper, offering to second the address. I had already written to a mover and a seconder, or I should have availed myself of your very kind and friendly offer. But although this circumstance prevents me from having recourse to you, either as mover or seconder, I hope that we shall have your assistance in support of the address. The difficulties in which we are involved by the present situation of public affairs, added to the abilities, activity, and violence of our opposers, will render it necessary for his Majesty's servants to call for the support of all their friends. On your zeal and friendly attachment I know we may depend, and I feel great satisfaction in that conviction, and I hope and trust that nothing will prevent you from giving us your countenance and support. I

have the honour to be, with great truth and respect,  
sir, your most faithful and humble servant,

“NORTH.”

The address pledged the House to a vigorous prosecution of the war, till a safe and honourable peace could be procured, implying their resolution to preserve the integrity of the empire.

Mr Sinclair appears for a short time to have been on terms of friendly intercourse with Lord North. Dining one day with that minister at his official residence in Downing Street, my father remarked on the convenience of the situation for the despatch of public business. “It is so,” said the Premier, “but,” added he, in reference to the then recent riots under Lord George Gordon, “you are not probably aware of its great advantages in time of popular commotion, of which I very lately have had experience. The street is narrow at its entrance, and therefore can be easily defended; and it has no other outlet. The house, though large behind, presents but a small front, having only three windows on a floor: and in case of necessity there is an easy access in the rear for receiving military aid from the Horse Guards.” While Mr Sinclair, in common with many other independent members, lamented the inactivity of the minister, he admired his wit, his versatility, and financial skill; and agreed with Mr Fox in considering him “the most accomplished speaker that ever

sat in Parliament.” Harassed by the increasing difficulties of the war with America, Lord North was sometimes heard to wish that Continent had never been discovered. He in part escaped the sarcasms of his opponents by falling asleep during a long debate, leaving to Sir Grey Cooper the task of noting down what he would afterwards be called upon to answer. My father used to give a curious instance of this happy faculty of somnolence in the good-natured minister. During a debate on ship-building some tedious speaker entered on a historical detail, in which, commencing with Noah’s ark, he traced the progress of the art regularly downwards. When he came to build the Spanish Armada, Sir Grey inadvertently awoke the slumbering Premier, who enquired at what era the honourable gentleman had arrived. Being answered, “We are now in the reign of Queen Elizabeth,” “Dear Sir Grey,” said he, “why not let me sleep a century or two more?”\*

In 1781 the young senator made his first speech in the House. The occasion was memorable. To the hostile confederacy against which Great Britain had been for some time struggling single-handed, was now added her most ancient ally. The Dutch, under the

\* There is much humour in this reply ; but it must yield the palm, I think, to a happy answer made in the American Congress. An interminable orator, haranguing empty benches, whispered to a friend, “I am speaking to *posterity*.” “If you go on at this rate,” said the other, “your speech will not be done till you see your audience before you.”

influence of France, had violated their alliance with this country; they had entered into engagements with America; they had loaded us with injuries and affronts, and withheld all satisfactory explanation. It was among Mr Sinclair's leading principles *never to despair of the commonwealth*. He deprecated the despondency expressed by various members as both dangerous and unfounded. This speech, being the first delivered by my father in the House, claims a place in these pages.

He expressed a mixture of regret and indignation, in which the latter was the chief ingredient, at the perfidy and hostility of Holland; a country bound to us by the strongest ties of ancient intercourse, by similarity of opinions and of prejudices, by gratitude, and by interest. While so many powers were leagued against Britain, that Holland should join the hostile confederacy was indeed astonishing; and to that country England might apply the proverbial words, *et tu Brute!* He recollected on this occasion the sentiment of De Witt, who had invariably looked upon Great Britain as the natural ally of Holland. The reasoning of this great and virtuous citizen should revive the spirits of gentlemen in that House, and determine them to support the dignity of the British empire with manliness and vigour. De Witt had said, that if ever Holland broke with Great Britain, the latter, from her superior local advantages, must prevail. The Dutch shipping avoided even in the



fairest weather the rocky and dangerous shores of France; and in tempestuous seasons were obliged to sail under the English coast: how easy, therefore, for English privateers to intercept their trade in the Channel? How easy, also, to deprive them of their most valuable fisheries, the bays and estuaries of Scotland, whence to our eternal disgrace, they drew annually five millions sterling! He exhorted the House to be firm. The courage and resources of the country were not yet exhausted. They were yet sufficient to extricate us out of all our difficulties. "But," he continued, "if you flinch; if you lose by timid counsels your rank and dignity amongst the states of Europe, farewell, a long farewell to all your greatness! For when we fall, we shall fall like Lucifer, never to rise again! If despondency exist, it exists only in the Senate. All ranks without doors are in the highest spirits, fitting out privateers against the enemies of their country, and raising subscriptions for its defence. With this example of energy and patriotism without doors, how shameful that doubt and fear should prevail within the walls of this House! For my own part, I can have no sympathy with the opposers of this address, nor can I lend my voice to their amendments. From my soul I declare my hearty resolution to resist all the enemies of my country."

The amendment proposed by the Opposition, dis-

approving of the war, was rejected by a majority of 79.

From this period the gloom occasioned by the vast naval confederacy against this country continued to increase. The triumphs of our navy in the days of Queen Elizabeth, of Cromwell, and of George II., were almost effaced by a long series of disappointments and calamities. Senegal, St Vincent, Grenada, Tobago, and other British settlements had been taken by the French ; and the actions fought by Keppel, Byron, Parker, Graves, and Rodney, with the allied fleets, had been unsuccessful or indecisive. Nothing could be more dismal than the forebodings of my father's correspondents at this time. "I am heartily sorry," says the member for Staffordshire, Sir John Wrottesley, "for the spirited exertions of our enemies, and I much fear that their hopes of the annihilation of our naval force increase daily." "I have communicated your information," says the member for Sarum, Mr Hussey, "but in vain,—nor indeed do I think the salvation of the country is to be effected by voluntary subscriptions. My temper does not lead me to despair, and, therefore, I will hope for more virtue and better times."

The noble lord at the head of the Admiralty was the Earl of Sandwich, described by my father as a gay, dissipated man, better fitted for shining at court than for presiding at a public board. Early in 1782,

Mr Fox proposed a resolution, "That during the year preceding, naval affairs had been grossly mismanaged." Lord Mulgrave, whose situation, as a Lord of the Admiralty, afforded him opportunities of the best information, augmented the general gloom by some unguarded or misrepresented speech on this vitally important subject. He was reported to have said, "that it was an incontrovertible truth (and the times of King William and Queen Anne supplied examples of the justice of the remark), that whenever the French directed their whole attention to the improvement and increase of their marine, they rendered it superior to the fleet of Great Britain, and were able to contend with us for the dominion of the ocean."

In reply to this assertion, Mr Sinclair published a very seasonable pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the Naval strength of the British Empire." He thus explains the object and occasion of the work:—  
"When the affairs of a nation are unsuccessfully conducted, it is natural to view every circumstance in the darkest light. Its present situation is always painted in the most deplorable colours; its future prospects are considered to be still more gloomy; nay, political sceptics do not hesitate to doubt the existence of its former splendour. In this manner the spirit of the nation is depressed, the vigour of its efforts is relaxed; its enemies exult over it, and it seems ready to crouch under the fury of their attacks."

"It is difficult on any other principle to account

for an idea which has been lately spread abroad, and has found its way into the great council of the nation : the tendency of which is to depreciate the former strength and character of the British navy. In the days of conquest and of triumph we have always ventured to consider ourselves as the natural sovereigns of the ocean ; and even foreigners, however partial they may have been to the maritime honour of their respective countries, have in general acknowledged the justice of our claim to the dominion of the sea.\* How much, therefore, must we feel ourselves humbled, when we are told, in the days of our adversity, by one who, considering his office, his profession, and character, ought not to have been misinformed, ‘ *that the navy of France alone always was, and always must be, superior to that of England, when the French bent their whole attention to that particular department.*’ ”

After this introduction, the author institutes a com-

\* “ L’Angleterre a depuis long temps gagné la superiorité sur la mer,” says a respectable political author, Beausobre. Introduction Générale à l’Etude de la Politique, p. 514. The famous M. de Real, in his Science du Gouvernement, tom. ii. p. 340, asserts, “ que les armes navales que la Grande Bretagne entretient, la rendent supérieure à quelque puissance maritime que ce soit.” The verses of Voltaire on the English nation are well known—

“ Ils sont Rois sur les eaux,  
Leur flotte impérieuse asservissant Neptune,  
Des bouts de l’univers appelle la Fortune.”

*La Henriade, Chant premier.*

parison between Great Britain and France, with respect to all the circumstances on which naval strength could be supposed to depend ; such as extent of coast, number and position of harbours, capabilities for anchorage, geographical position, fisheries, commerce, materials for ship-building, naval architecture, provisions, nautical skill, national character, and form of government. He shows that Great Britain enjoyed, in all these respects, an incontestable superiority over her rival ; and to establish his conclusion, appeals to the authority of the most eminent historians and naval writers of France, including Deslandes, Millot, Du Tot, Voltaire, Raynal, De Real, and especially the Count de Boulainvilliers, whose work was designed to reanimate his countrymen, depressed in the preceding war by their calamities at sea. Mr Sinclair goes on to prove that England had availed herself of the advantages he had enumerated, having gained an almost uninterrupted series of triumphs, from the times of Elizabeth to the peace of Paris. The only period, during which the rival nations were nearly matched at sea, was the reign of William III.; when the French, off Beachy Head, gained a transient superiority, followed by a decisive defeat off La Hogue, which their navy was never able to recover. He subjoins some curious tables, enumerating the ships of war taken or destroyed by each nation during different seasons of hostility. The result may be thus stated :—

## In the wars of King William—

The French lost 59 ships, mounting 2244 guns.

The English lost 50 ships, mounting 1112 guns.

— 9	— 1132
--------	-----------

## In the wars of Queen Anne—

The French lost 52 ships, mounting 3094 guns.

The English lost 38 ships, mounting 1596 guns.

— 14	— 1498
---------	-----------

## State of the navy of France during the preceding war—

	Ships.	Guns.	Men.
Line of battle,	95		
Frigates, .	142		
	— 237	9682	110,775

## Taken or destroyed by the English—

	Ships.	Guns.	Men.
Line of battle,	47		
Frigates, .	84		
	— 131	5278	60,420

## Total of the French navy at the peace in 1763—

Ships.	Guns.	Men.
106	4404	50,335

This astonishing success of England, he observes, led the Abbé Raynal to acknowledge that “ Great Britain, by her maritime force, could balance the navy of the universe.” My father, after remarking that the character of the war had changed, and must from that time become exclusively naval, urges upon the Admiralty the necessity of greater diligence and activity in their department : he exhorts the King and Parliament to give some marked and unequivocal demonstration that the naval service is the surest road to fame, to fortune, and to glory ; and he reminds British seamen of all ranks, that on their hardihood, intrepidity, and patriotism, not only the honour of their profession, but the existence of their country must depend. “ These,” he concludes, “ are the grounds which induce me to hope better for the future ; for though our enemies are numerous, and unfortunately united in the great object of humbling the British flag, yet the success of their scheme must depend fully as much upon our inactivity as upon their strength. Let us bend our whole attention to the naval department ; let us be firm, steady, and united ; and it is still possible that the war, which at present seems to threaten our own coasts, may yet be carried into the very havens of our enemies.”

These expressions of confidence in our naval strength were justified within the short period of eight days after the publication of the pamphlet, by news from the West Indies of the great victory gained by

Admiral Rodney over De Grasse on the 12th of April.

Upon the author of this well-timed publication congratulations were poured forth from all quarters on the success of his performance. “I have read your work,” says Morris Robinson, Esq., M. P., afterwards Lord Rokeby, “and have no scruple to affirm it to be the most respectable work ever published by a native of this island. In it you have fully demonstrated the power Great Britain possesses of maintaining a naval force superior to any establishment the resources of France are enabled to furnish. That is so very material a consideration at all times, but peculiarly so in the present situation of affairs, that you are undoubtedly entitled to the thanks of all your countrymen for your performance.” But the author was peculiarly gratified by the following passage, communicated in a letter from the very individual whose supposed opinions he controverted. In a letter, dated on board the *Courageux*, Spithead, 22d June, 1782, Lord Mulgrave says,—“My expressions and meaning have been mistaken; but I cannot say unfortunately, since the mistake has produced so handsome an eulogium on the naval service of this country, and so comfortable a prospect of its strength and resources from so able a hand; and has, at the same time, shown to the public that a member of the British Senate, not connected by profession or office with the navy, has made it so



much his study. It is of little consequence whether any opinions of mine are mistaken or misrepresented, but if the opinions which you combat have been generally entertained, and could be supposed to derive any degree of weight from being imputed to me, it was essential they should be refuted with the degree of force and authority which your abilities and name must give to the refutation."

The favourable reception given by the public to this pamphlet induced the author, not long afterwards, to print a second tract, showing how the country might most effectually improve the advantages and resources explained in the first. As a general anxiety prevailed to procure peace on any terms, Mr Sinclair begins with the following spirited observations:—"The reports which have been lately circulated of an approaching peace induced me to examine a very curious and important political paper, entitled, 'An Historical Memorial of the Negotiation of France and England from the 26th of March to the 20th of September, 1761.' It is translated from a French original, which was published by the Court of France with a view of proving that every step was taken at that time, consistent with the dignity of an independent power, to procure an accommodation. The splendid success which had attended the arms of Great Britain, and the low state to which France was reduced, are too well known to require any particular recital. Yet the memorial

alluded to (near the conclusion) contains this judicious and well-founded observation :—‘ They who talk so readily upon all occasions that *we must have peace*, do not consider that, however well disposed a sovereign may be for the re-establishment of tranquillity, his desire cannot be effectual but when it is equally sincere on the part of the other belligerent powers.’ To find such a sentiment held forth by a French courtier and statesman (for the Duke de Choiseul subscribes the memorial), at a moment when France was reduced to the very brink of destruction, and to hear, on the other hand, the mean and pusillanimous manner in which the citizens of this free country are apt at present to express themselves, I confess, fills me with equal grief and astonishment. That peace is at this time a desirable object to a country that has been so long engaged in a war unattended with many prosperous events, no man is more willing to allow ; but that we are as yet reduced to a state that ought to make us wish for peace on any terms, however degrading and humiliating, is a tenet which every man who sincerely wishes the glory and prosperity of his country ought strenuously to oppose.” He then proceeds to comment on the humiliating terms which England, it was understood, would be required by the confederates to concede. He shows that our financial difficulties, however great, were not so formidable as theirs ; that the conduct of the war, on our part, especially on

the American continent, might be essentially improved ; and that one resource remained, even if every other should fail, for dividing our foes, and gaining new allies. We might support, in conjunction with the other powers of Europe, and in particular with the armed neutrality, a general system of colonial emancipation. “ If,” says he, “ the colonies of France, and, more especially, if those of Spain were open to our manufactures, we should have the greatest reason to rejoice at the independence of America. Indeed, a general colonial emancipation would be a fortunate conclusion of the present war, both for this country and for mankind. Those rich and fertile provinces which South America contains have too long groaned under the dominion of the proud and sluggish Spaniard, and might soon wear a new face were they opened to the exertions and industry of this country and of Europe. To question whether the different powers of the European continent would support such a system is to doubt of their being possessed of common ambition, or indeed of common sense ; for were the house of Bourbon to retain its colonies there, while Great Britain lost hers, every one must perceive that the safety and independence of Europe in general would be endangered.” Without pausing to speculate on the effects which this curious and interesting suggestion might have produced, Mr Sinclair proceeds to answer two prevailing fallacies : namely, that it was difficult to procure

seamen to man the ships already built ; and that it was still more difficult to build more when wanted. His details and calculations on the latter point, that of building ships, cannot easily be abridged ; but his plan for providing seamen without impressment is too ingenious to be passed over.

He proposes that the whole coast of the three kingdoms should be placed under the superintendence of naval officers, who should register the seafaring people in their respective districts : that when men were voted for the navy, each district should be called upon to provide a certain proportion, according to the number of its maritime population ; and that in providing this quota, the inspecting officer should, if necessary, adopt a series of measures, each more vigorous than its predecessor. He was, first of all, to offer a bounty, and beat up for volunteers ; he was next to lay an embargo upon vessels of all sizes and denominations throughout the district, and thereby to interest all classes in procuring, as soon as possible, the required quota ; he was then, in the presence of two or more justices of the peace, to cast lots which of the seamen in his register should be compelled to serve ; and lastly, in case of their refusal, he was to employ compulsion—not by means of press-gangs, which was a barbarous method, and gave seamen a distaste for the service, but by means of the civil, and, if necessary, the military power.

Some idea of the unpopularity of the naval service

at that time, may be derived from a letter of the member for Staffordshire to Mr Sinclair, blaming the Admiralty for “great negligence in not having press-gangs in the internal parts of the kingdom. For many sailors,” says he, “are secreted here, who fly from the metropolis and its environs, in order to escape the hot press now going forward, and with proper attention and proper powers to the magistracy, many useful hands may be found.”

Mr Sinclair concludes his second pamphlet with an ardent and patriotic wish, that the navy should be rewarded with a larger distribution of honours and distinctions than had been customary. He recommends the institution of a naval order of knighthood, to reward, by appropriate decorations, the gallant achievements of our navy, “a new coinage,” as it has been figuratively called, “of which the value could not be depressed, nor the stamp counterfeited, nor the ore exhausted.” An approximation to Mr Sinclair’s system has since been made, by extending the Order of the Bath, which now includes officers of a lower rank, and in greater numbers, than formerly.

A monument of Mr Sinclair’s zeal and industry in collecting materials for these naval pamphlets, is still extant, in a huge pile of folios and scarce tracts on nautical affairs now before me in his library.\*

\* The following is the conclusion of a whimsical critique on the above-mentioned Tracts, taken from the Whitehall Evening Post for August 27, 1782 :—“The writer deserves a place at

Before leaving finally a subject in which my father did not again take any prominent part, I may mention, that he once presented a copy of his *Naval Tracts* to Lord Nelson, and received from him an answer, which, to admirers of that great man, may not be uninteresting :—

“ Merton, Dec. 8, 1801.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I had the honour of receiving, through the hands of Mr Mollison, your very elegant present of a book, to the subject of which too much attention cannot be paid ; and, without a compliment, no man in the country is so able to place this important matter in its proper view before the public. I can hardly believe, however anxiously I have endeavoured to deserve it, the high compliment you are pleased to bestow upon me. But, dear sir, I beg you to be assured that I am, with every sentiment of obligation, your most obedient servant,

“ NELSON AND BRONTE.”

I have already mentioned, that one of the reasons which induced Mr Sinclair, on coming into Parliament, to support the administration of Lord North, was the hope that a safe and honourable termination the Admiralty Board, and we hear with pleasure that the author of a certain unpopular speech” (alluding to Lord Mulgrave) “ has left a vacancy for him there.”

of the American war might be more advantageously negotiated by that Minister than by his opponents. But a closer acquaintance with the feelings and projects of the Government convinced him that no serious overture for peace was likely to proceed from that quarter. At the same time, he apprehended that the partiality of the Opposition for America might, if they rose to power, lead to precipitate and unwarrantable concession.

I find, among my father's papers, a list drawn up by him about this time for his own private use, describing the state of parties in the House of Commons. The number of members able to attend their duty was about 430, of whom 230 generally supported the Administration, and 200 the Opposition. Among the nominal adherents of each party, he reckons about 50 on either side, whose support was lukewarm and precarious. These consisted of Earl Gower's friends, and of some independent country gentlemen, who voted according to their own judgment, without regard to the authority of a leader. This nice balance of power was incompatible with a strong government. At any time, the mere fraction of sixteen added to the smaller party, would have made it a majority.

Under these critical circumstances, the member for Caithness held frequent conferences with the other country gentlemen, representing to them the influence they might acquire from co-operation, compared with their present insignificance as isolated individuals.

He suggested that men of talent and patriotism should unite to form, out of the two great parties, a powerful Cabinet, and retrieve the sinking fortunes of the nation. His list contains the names of a hundred and five members, whom he considered more or less independent, and with whom, directly or indirectly, he might hold communication.

With these materials to work upon, he printed and widely circulated four appeals to the independent senators of Great Britain, entitled, "Public Hints," urging them to throw off the servitude of party, and combine their efforts for the preservation of their country. "That such a contest," says he, "should still be kept up, and that the more our enemies are multiplied, the fiercer and more virulent it should become; nay, that discord should triumph at a crisis when *all parties* must be sensible of the folly of their past conduct, strikes every impartial and thinking man with equal astonishment and horror. For, on the one hand, it is evident that in many particulars the present Administration must have been greatly to blame: otherwise, we could never have been overwhelmed by such a series of misfortunes. It is clear that their measures could never have proved so uniformly unsuccessful, had they been vigilant enough in procuring proper information; had they been sufficiently active and spirited in forming and executing their plans; and had they resolutely determined to punish those by whom their orders were neglected.



But, on the other hand, if those who are not in power claim *any merit* from the misfortunes or misconduct of their opponents, and think themselves exempted from any share in the sources of our public calamities, a little consideration will prove how egregiously they are mistaken.

“ To establish their claims to such an exemption, they must prove that it has been no injury to public discipline, to have held forth an asylum, into the capacious bosom of which every individual might be admitted, whose misconduct, whether in a civil, naval, or military department, had rendered him obnoxious to the justice of the laws.

“ They must also prove that no injury has accrued to the state from inflaming the passions of America, from raising the enmity of our enemies, from magnifying their revenues and their power, whilst at the same time they undervalued the strength, the spirit, and resources of our own country.

“ Lastly, they must for ever obliterate from a volume, not undeservedly accounted the very Koran of the party, the memorable words which fell from the pen of Junius : ‘ Their declaration’ (namely ‘ those who were accounted the heads of Opposition) ‘ gave spirit and argument to the colonies ; and while, perhaps, they meant no more than the ruin of the Minister, they in effect divided one half of the empire from the other.’ ” \*

\* Junius, Letter I.

By means of these papers, and by force of personal solicitation, he prevailed upon a number of independent members to meet occasionally at the St Alban's Tavern, for the purpose of discussing the prospects of the country and the proceedings of the Cabinet. In his correspondence with these gentlemen I find a curious illustration of the difficulties attending an incipient political project, and of the tact, energy, and perseverance required to surmount them. Letters, of course, are not to be expected from all the members, as many would be personally solicited, and notes of apology for absence would not be sent by those who regularly attended.

Mr (afterwards Sir William) Pulteney is "obliged by the perusal of the papers, and will attend as early as possible in the House of Commons, to receive farther explanations."

Lord Mahon consents to a resolution, reprobating "offensive war upon the Continent of America against the British revolted colonies, as tending to weaken our efforts against the House of Bourbon."

Sir Herbert Mackworth, member for Cardiff, enters warmly into the measures suggested: he is detained in the country; "but," continues he, "I beg you will consider me as one of your number present, and joining in the plan as one of the society: I can very safely depute you my proxy, if it may be admitted on the present occasion, having a perfect

confidence in the uprightness of your intentions, and abilities to adapt them to great public good."

Viscount Maitland (now Earl of Lauderdale) writes in great haste, expecting what he terms "a motion of a conciliatory nature, declaring the inexpediency of the affairs of the country remaining in the same hands, without specifying who or what number ought to be removed."

Sir Robert Herries, member for Dumfries, "thinks Mr Sinclair is entitled to much praise for having executed as well as planned a laudable institution," and requests a conference with him on the subject.

The Earl of Surrey (afterwards Duke of Norfolk) will "meet Mr Sinclair, and the gentlemen mentioned by him, at the St Alban's."

Mr Sibthorpe, member for Boston, "will give Mr Sinclair's papers much attention in the first moment of leisure."

Mr J. Rolle (afterwards Lord Rolle) "will attend with great readiness the next meeting at the St Alban's, and will be happy in co-operating with other independent members to support such measures as may appear to them for the real interest of his king and country."

Mr Lygon (afterwards Earl Beauchamp), having been called into the country, "is much obliged by Mr Sinclair's recollection of a runaway," and describes the county of Worcester "in high spirits,

thinking a change of Ministers implies every blessing that can restore a kingdom."

"Mr George Ross being prevented from attending by illness, hopes that the meeting was numerous and respectable, and will send in the evening for a list."

Sir Henry Houghton, member for Preston, "receives with great satisfaction Mr Sinclair's information that there is a prospect of an union of independent members of Parliament in some efforts to save their sinking country."

Mr Brickdale, member for Bristol, "will be glad at any time to communicate with Mr Sinclair on the subject of his plans."

Mr Montague, in six successive notes, assures Mr Sinclair that he is "full of zeal in the cause," and will observe "secrecy," adding, however, that "he is forbidden by his physicians not only to attend the House, but even to hold conversation at any length."

Mr Strutt, member for Maldon, enters warmly into Mr Sinclair's plans; has communicated them to Mr Bramston, Mr Sibthorpe, and Mr Bulloch; recommends caution; and proposes that the first meeting should consist of not more than ten or twelve members; "for," says he, "every man, however shackled, wishes to be considered as free and independent." He adds, "Whether the present Ministry is equal to the conduct of the war, is not for me to determine, and yet I wish a change of two persons."

But I will be bold to say, that neither this nor any other Ministry can be active and frugal who have to contend with an Opposition so virulent and ——— as the present. I confine myself to the leaders and their particular adherents. Something must be done to compel the Minister, whoever he may be, to economy ; and to excite to decided and vigorous measures : at the same time opposition must be silenced.”

But perhaps the nature and objects of the St Alban's Club, and the sentiments generally pervading its members, may be best collected from the following letter of Mr Gilbert, the member for Litchfield :—

“ Lillyshall, 2d Jan. 1782.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have been in the country ten days ; but so much engaged in a variety of business as to prevent my attention to those very important concerns respecting the public which have of late so much engrossed your thoughts and mine ; however, from a desire to contribute the utmost of my endeavours to promote so excellent a plan, and to show that regard which is due to you for your very laudable exertions therein, I have retired for an hour or two from other affairs to resume the consideration of our favourite object, and to communicate my thoughts a little farther to you.

“ I think we cannot do better service at present than by communicating our plan to such public-

spirited members as we happen to be connected or acquainted with, who have the real love of their country at heart; all these, I doubt not, will cheerfully co-operate with and assist us, in a work so essential at this crisis, and which promises so much relief to this poor, I may add unfortunate, divided, and distracted country; at the very brink of ruin, whilst she is possessed of resources sufficient to extricate her from her present distresses, to make her a scourge to her haughty and perfidious enemy, and to raise her to a greater pitch of glory than she has ever yet attained; if they were properly exerted, and her affairs administered with that spirit, equity, justice, and economy which they ought.

“ I think with you, that we ought to be prepared with a plan for our coadjutors to look up to, for the speedy attaining these desirable ends; when that is settled, I trust there is virtue and spirit enough yet left in this country, both in the sovereign and the people, to accomplish the great and good work.

“ Notwithstanding my engagements in private affairs, I shall devote many hours to the consideration of these most important concerns before I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I hope will be on the twentieth of this month. I have been from Cotton some days, and shall not return till Sunday or Monday se’ennight, having many engagements in this and the adjoining counties. I have the honour

to be, with the utmost respect, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

“THOMAS GILBERT.”

Mr Sinclair laid before these and other political friends various resolutions, to be submitted to the House of Commons preliminary to changes in the government. The most important were the following.

“Resolved, that it is the opinion of this House, that in the present dangerous and critical state of public affairs, it is expedient and necessary to make such alterations in some of the different departments of the state as may revive the spirit and confidence of the people, and unite them in the firmest and most strenuous efforts against their natural enemies.

“Resolved, that it is necessary to establish a system of public economy in the financial department of the government.

“Resolved, That it is necessary to adopt such measures as shall reform the inadequate representation of the people in the House of Commons.”

In the event of the adoption by the House of these resolutions, my father was prepared with two plans of a Coalition Ministry, one to be headed by Earl Gower, the other by the Marquis of Rockingham. The names of Fox, Burke, and Pitt occur in both lists. To ascertain the views of Earl Gower, Mr Sinclair addressed a letter to the Earl's son-in-

law, Mr Macdonald, afterwards Chief Baron of England, soliciting his concurrence in the resolutions. Mr Macdonald replied, that Lord Gower thought “resolutions and addresses impolitic things, as, after all, they could not point out men or measures, but must leave that still to the Crown.”—“Enough,” he adds, “has been done to make some change unavoidable. I do not see that we should advance in any degree, by multiplying the evidences of the sense of the nation against the continuance of power, where it is now placed.”

Among the papers connected with the St Alban's Club, I find the following sketch of a letter to Mr Pitt:—

“Mr Sinclair presents his compliments to Mr Pitt ; and in case any alteration in the proposed resolutions, of a union among the independent members of the House, comes to be considered, begs that he would be so obliging as to communicate the following observations to the meeting:—

“1. Any union of members, composed of such as have generally voted on one side of the House, would not answer any effectual purpose,—a union of minority members would only be Opposition in miniature ; and if such as supported Administration, and considered themselves as independent, were to join together, they would still have the same prejudices against Opposition, by which, in a great measure, their present conduct is directed. The prejudices of moderate and in-



dependent men can only be got the better of by intercourse with men of other sentiments ; and Mr Sinclair is fully persuaded, if such an intercourse were established, that many men, on the one side of the House, would not be found so corrupted or so much influenced by the power of the Crown, and many others, on the other side, would not be found so violent or so democratical, as at present is currently imagined.

“ 2. Mr Sinclair is particularly anxious to have such a union established, because he has received information this morning, from a person whose name he cannot communicate, but which he considers to be abundantly authentic, that there is still a door open for re-establishing a connexion with America, and that there is not a single circumstance that would contribute more to so desirable an event as the union that is proposed. He can also assure the meeting, from another quarter, that a leading man in the Congress has lately informed his correspondent in London, that the Americans are desirous of a peace, and are not bound to have the consent of France to a treaty with this country.

“ 3. Mr Sinclair believes that a sufficient number of friends to the present Administration might be procured, who would join with any respectable members who support Opposition on the basis of the propositions he has suggested ; and that, when the motions of Opposition are supported by them, they cannot fail to be successful. He begs leave to suggest to the

consideration of gentlemen, whether we are not now reduced to a situation that ought to make men of property and of public spirit decline standing upon punctilios, when, if something is not done very speedily, the nation can hardly be preserved. The friends to Opposition may be the less inclined to insist upon explicit declarations, when they consider that men who have opposed the lengths to which some who are considered as too violent by the impartial have carried their systems of reformation,—that such men, I say, cannot well go farther than to declare, ‘We shall consider your plans of a constitutional nature deliberately, and will give them every reasonable assistance.’ Any stronger declaration would be very properly considered as a renunciation of their former principles, which it is not reasonable to demand.

“4. and lastly, When an Opposition is established, men of violent and fiery tempers generally take the lead, and moderate men cannot join any party where such individuals are permitted to be the dictators: unless, therefore, a third party is established, we are likely to continue in the same distracted state we have done, without any material alteration. And, indeed, Mr Sinclair is himself persuaded that the more unsuccessful we are, the firmer the present Administration will be riveted in their places; for the more violent the leaders of Opposition are, the less inclined moderate men will be to give them any assistance.”

During these transactions, a circumstance occurred

which stimulated the country gentlemen to more decided measures. Mr Laurens, formerly President of Congress, and recognised under that title by the British Commissioners in America, had been sent to Europe with full powers to conclude a treaty with Holland, then clandestinely negotiating with the United States. The vessel which conveyed this envoy was captured by a British cruiser; and his papers, which he had taken the precaution to throw overboard, were fortunately recovered and transmitted to the British Cabinet. Laurens himself was committed close prisoner to the tower; but in consequence of strong representations in the House of Commons by the Opposition, he was liberated on parole, after an imprisonment of several months. My father was introduced to him by their common friend, Mr Oswald, who was afterwards employed by our Government to conclude a peace with America. They became intimate, and freely discussed the means of adjusting an accommodation between the countries. In one of their conversations, Mr Sinclair was authorized to acquaint the Ministry, that if they would permit Mr Laurens to visit Paris he would ascertain for them what terms could be procured, and return with the information. He hinted, at the same time, his conviction, that these terms would be more favourable than they anticipated. Mr Sinclair lost no time in communicating to the then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Stormont, this, as he thought, highly

acceptable intelligence ; but, to his astonishment, the Minister received the information with most ungracious coldness. “The Americans,” says his Lordship, “are rebels ; and we have no doubt that it will yet be in our power to subdue their rebellion. If Laurens goes to Paris, he goes at his own peril.” This impolitic speech was of course communicated by the member for Caithness to the country gentlemen, who resolved at once publicly to declare their wishes for peace. The suspicions long entertained as to the insincerity of Ministers in their amicable professions towards America, and which had furnished Fox and Burke with pregnant topics of sarcasm, were now indisputably confirmed. Many members, on whose support Lord North had reckoned, now avowed openly their resolution to abandon him.

My narrative does not require me to enter farther into the particulars which attended the resignation of Lord North. On the 20th of March, 1782, he yielded to the difficulties which had been long accumulating round him. Lord Surrey rose to propose a resolution, expressing want of confidence in the Ministry : the Premier rose at the same instant, declaring the proposal unnecessary, since the persons who had for some time conducted public business had ceased to be Ministers of the Crown.

Having quoted from my father’s papers a few reminiscences of Lord North when in power, I may here add one anecdote of that Minister, long after his resig-

nation. It is not often that fallen greatness receives testimonies of gratitude and good feeling from the objects of its former bounty. Lord North had much promoted the restoration of the forfeited estates in Scotland. Some time before that measure was agreed upon, young Cameron of Lochiel had been introduced to the Minister, who was so much pleased with his address as to remember him at a crisis when his patronage was most desirable, and to insist upon the Lochiel estate being added to the list of those to be restored. A relation of Lochiel took an opportunity to show the sense of obligation cherished by his family after the Minister was out of place, and blind. Having the captaincy of an East-Indiaman to give away, this gentleman (whose name was Cameron) wrote to Lord North, with the offer to appoint any person whom his Lordship might recommend. The retired statesman was much affected by this evidence of generous feeling, and declared, almost with tears, "This is the only instance of *undoubted gratitude* that I have ever met with."

At the head of the new Administration now formed was the Marquis of Rockingham, with Lord Shelburne and Mr Fox for Principal Secretaries of State,—Mr Pitt had no office.

A pamphlet, by Mr Sinclair, appeared soon after, entitled, "Thoughts on the Propriety of Dissolving the present Parliament." He shows the advantage of investing the Sovereign with that power, and the

reasons why, in the present instance, it should be exercised. He exposes the intrigues of the late Ministers to secure a majority in the House; laments the violence which the late concussion of parties had engendered; hopes that, in the event of a dissolution, the more factious members would be unseated by a constituency disgusted with their turbulence; and, lastly, expatiates on the pre-eminent importance of the questions which a new Parliament would have to determine, and which minds free from bitterness of past contentions would approach with greater candour. The most interesting peculiarity in this pamphlet is a table drawn up by the author to show the average duration of Parliaments from the reign of Henry VII. to the dissolution in 1780. From the table in question, it appears that this average did not exceed two years and about nine months, even including the long Parliament of Charles I., and the still longer one which his son retained in existence for the enormous period of seventeen years.

It was no small evidence of disinterestedness that a proposal for dissolving Parliament proceeded from the member for Caithness—one of the three members whose constituents were restricted to alternate representation.

Mr Sinclair was this year the successful promoter of a measure which formed, in after life, one of his most agreeable reminiscences. Scotland had twice

been visited with the miseries of famine, but in neither instance more severely than at this time. So cold and stormy was the summer of 1782, that the crops were late and unpromising. “ On the fifth of October, before they had time to ripen, a frost, armed almost with the rigour of a Greenland climate, desolated, in one night, the hope of the husbandman. The grain, frost-bitten, immediately contracted a hoary whiteness. Potatoes and turnips, already dwarfish, were further injured. The produce of the garden was destitute of its usual nourishment, and the fields yielded not one-third of an ordinary crop.” \* No wholesome food could be procured ; and disease, as well as famine, began to overspread, not only the whole north of Scotland, but even some districts in the south. On this occasion of general distress and alarm, the member for Caithness earnestly besought the interposition of Parliament. An objection was started that no precedent could be found for such a grant as he solicited ; and that a precedent, once furnished, would lead to troublesome and endless applications. The late Ministry having long been subject to the trammels of office, adhered rigidly to forms and rules. Their successors indulged more liberal ideas. Mr Sheridan, in particular (at that

\* See Statistical Account of Fordyce, vol. iii. p. 62 ; Parish of Duthil, vol. iv. p. 316 ; vol. xiv. p. 188, &c.

time Secretary to the Treasury), entered with great zeal into the cause, and a motion was at last agreed to for a committee on the subject. Their report was so conclusive, that the House presented an address, recommending the calamitous state of the north of Scotland to his Majesty's gracious consideration, and promising to make good the expense incurred. The whole cost of this well-timed relief was little more than L.15,000; and yet no less a number than 111,521 souls, inhabitants of fifteen counties, were rescued from starvation.\*

The apprehensions entertained in Parliament that the aid afforded in this instance might lead to importunate and annoying solicitations on occasions of less necessity, received, some years afterwards, a memorable rebuke from the gratitude and high spirit of the northern population. A hurricane of unexampled severity laid waste, in 1807, some of the districts which had availed themselves of the Parliamentary grant. On this occasion my father wrote to Malcolm Laing, the historian, suggesting a petition to the Legislature for a renewal of its bounty. Mr Laing's answer is as follows :—

\* “Where parishes could do without such aid, the bounty was declined, that a larger proportion of it might go to the places where it was more wanted.”—*Statistical Account of Abernyte*, vol. ix. p. 151, Note. See also *Lethnot*, vol. iv. p. 10; and *Muirhouse*, vol. xiii. p. 166.



“ Sir,

“ I beg leave to acknowledge the honour of your letter, which I have communicated to most of the gentlemen in the county, and shall take the first opportunity of laying before a county meeting.

“ The prevailing sentiment, I believe, is this:— That although many individuals suffered severely from the storm on Christmas-day, yet, having experienced the humane interposition of Government during a season of absolute scarcity, nothing less than an actual dearth will induce the county again to apply to the bounty of Parliament. This proceeds from the apprehension of abusing or exhausting that liberality, to which the county has already been so much indebted. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

MALCOLM LAING.

“ Kirkwall, May 25th, 1807.”

Another boon which, during the same session, my father contributed to obtain for Scotland, was not so important as the preceding, but was highly popular and acceptable. An act was passed, repealing the prohibition (19th George II.) of the ancient Highland dress. On his next journey through the Highlands, Mr Sinclair availed himself of this national concession by appearing in full Highland costume. On his way to visit Lord Breadalbane, passing through the town of Logierait, he had an amusing

proof of the association established by recent events in the minds of Highlanders, between their ancient garb and the fortunes of the house of Stuart. Having quitted his carriage, he was enjoying on foot a ramble among the wild mountain scenery of that neighbourhood, followed by a multitude of the natives, speaking Gaelic with great vehemence. An old Highlander at length accosted him in a cautious whisper, “ Sir, if you are come here *in the good old cause*, I can give you to understand that there are a hundred gude men ready to join you, within the sound o’ the bell o’ Logierait.” These simple-minded people took my father for at least an emissary of Charles Edward, or perhaps for Charles Edward himself.

The new Ministry had pledged themselves to a reform in Parliament. So early as 1779, associations had been formed to procure a more equal, or as it was termed, more constitutional representation of the people. In 1780, general deputations met in London, when resolutions of a moderate character, recommending an augmentation of the county members, were agreed upon. Mr Alderman Sawbridge had for some time made an annual motion in Parliament on the subject. Mr Sinclair had introduced it at the St Alban’s tavern amongst his political friends, as the basis of a Parliamentary resolution. The public also concurred very generally in the same views; attributing the continuance of Lord North in

office, and the calamities of the country, to the corrupt state of the Legislature.

During the short recess subsequent to Lord North's resignation, Mr Sinclair employed his pen in "Lucubrations on Reform." He begins by showing how imperatively the new Ministers were bound to effect those improvements in the legislature, to which, while in Opposition, they had pledged themselves. He remarks that three schemes of Parliamentary reformation had been suggested. One was to increase the county members by a hundred; another to diminish the borough members by the same number; and the third to transfer a hundred members from boroughs to counties. He approves of the last plan, and proceeds to vindicate it from objections. Anticipating the objection that disfranchisement was an act of injustice, he insists that the privileges of individuals must give way to the general good, provided only that a compensation be made to them by the public. "How many rights," he asks, "were our Sovereigns legally possessed of, which were gradually taken away as opportunities for that purpose occurred; nay, have not the privileges which were enjoyed by the members of both Houses of Parliament been diminished, and shall the unconstitutional claims of a few petty villages be regarded?" He quotes the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in Scotland as a case in point, in which the proprietors were obliged to accept a compensation for their rights

as decreed by a court of justice. He then gives a table stating the number of electors in all the cities and boroughs of England, showing that the aggregate amounted only to about 95,000. He proposes that fifteen boroughs, containing in all only 700 voters, should be totally disfranchised; and that seventy boroughs, which in all had only 6000, should lose one member each. To dispose of the hundred seats thus rendered vacant, he suggests that thirty-eight English counties should have two additional members each; Warwickshire three; Yorkshire and Middlesex four. He allows two additional members to the city of London; the same to Westminster; and one to the borough of Southwark. "It is the opinion of some," he continues, "that London and Middlesex ought to have a much larger share in the representation of the people, from the taxes they pay, and the number of their inhabitants. The claim is not without foundation; but such is the natural weight which the capital has in every country, and such, indeed, are the privileges and advantages which London has already received (even as it has been inadequately represented), that in prudence it ought not to claim such a number of representatives as would probably excite the envy, suspicion, and jealousy of the rest of the kingdom." Adopting Dr Price's calculation, he considers eight as the proper quota of addition to the representation of Scotland, and grants two to Wales. By this arrangement, the proposed augmentation of

county members to the extent of a hundred would be completed.

In estimating the amount of compensation to the disfranchised boroughs, he values each seat at L.500 per annum, and, consequently, a hundred seats at L.50,000. In the case of such boroughs as were private property, the compensation, he thought, should be made to the owner; but in the case of larger boroughs, should be expended in improving the town, rather than enriching the constituency. Finally, he recommends that disfranchised burghers should have votes in their respective counties. The chief recommendation of this plan was, that it avoided intermeddling with the variety of franchise by which, in those days, the constitution was distinguished, and by virtue of which all interests were substantially represented.

Several replies to this pamphlet came out, and one in particular by Mr Thomas Pitt (afterwards Lord Camelford), member for Old Sarum. The quarter from which this answer proceeded was a source of triumph and amusement to the Reformers, one of whom, Lord Surrey, sarcastically remarked, that Mr Sinclair's lucubrations had "the merit of rousing the dragon of Old Sarum to defend his golden fleece from the attacks of innovators." In the present day my father's tract would be looked upon as Conservative, but it gave unbounded satisfaction to the most noted liberals of that period. The Rev. Mr Wyvill, secre-

tary to the Yorkshire Association, conveys to him, in the warmest terms, the thanks of that numerous and influential body. "I can, with truth and satisfaction, assure you," says he, "that your lucubrations have been highly approved in Yorkshire by many of the friends to constitutional improvement, who must ever respect your zeal, and public spirit, and unremitted attention to the cause of Parliamentary reformation." The point respecting which Mr Sinclair was most apprehensive of giving dissatisfaction to the reforming party, was the grant which he suggested of compensation to the disfranchised boroughs. To this grant, however, the Yorkshire Association made no objection. Mr Wyvill, indeed, even reminds him that a similar suggestion had been thrown out in the memorial of the first general deputation held in London. The following letter from Dr Price, relative to this pamphlet, will be read with much interest and some surprise :—

" Dear Sir,

" I have read your pamphlet with particular pleasure. The proposal it contains of a reform in the representation of the kingdom would, were it carried into execution, go a great way towards satisfying my wishes. I reckon this a fundamental point. Our representation is little better than a mockery. Our new ministers will, I hope, do somewhat toward giving us a *real* representation, by adopting some such scheme

as yours. They are at present almost omnipotent ; and if they don't use their power to do this, I shall think them inexcusable.

“ The manner in which you mention me is very kind, and does me honour. Deliver my best wishes to Mrs Sinclair, and accept the same yourself, from your very obedient and humble servant,

RICHARD PRICE.

“ Newington Green, May 2, 1782.”

In the following note, Lord Shelburne pointedly, and, as some might think, prophetically, describes the vast importance of the question :—

“ Lord Shelburne presents his compliments to Mr Sinclair, and returns him many thanks for the enclosure of a late pamphlet, containing much useful information, and written with a candour, which cannot fail of influencing a question that must sooner or later decide the fate of the country.”

The letters above given are worth notice, from the character of their respective writers, and from the peculiar aspect of the question at that early stage. To these communications from reformers, I may subjoin a paragraph from a letter of Lord Hailes, written two years afterwards, and pronouncing a judgment diametrically opposed to theirs :—“ I wish you an harmonious session, and that you and your friends

may not split among yourselves. I always dread any motion about Parliamentary Reform ; that will jumble parties, and then all is over."

When Parliament met, Mr Pitt brought forward his celebrated motion for the appointment of a committee to enquire into the state of the popular representation. But this measure, notwithstanding the eloquence of the proposer, and the exertions of its supporters, including Mr Fox and other Ministers, was rejected by a majority of twenty. Mr Thomas Pitt, to whom we have referred, took the lead in opposing the motion of his relative.

The debate on that occasion made a deep impression upon my father's mind. He now conceived his own plan of reform to have gone too far, and proceeded accordingly to modify it in another tract, entitled, "Reflections on the Expediency of Increasing the present Number of the Representatives of the People."

The new Ministry was of short duration. In the course of about three months Lord Rockingham died. Lord Shelburne succeeded him as First Lord of the Treasury. Mr Fox, taking offence at this appointment, unexpectedly resigned ; and Mr Pitt being offered, at the early age of twenty-three, the high station of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was induced to take a place in the Administration.

The Member for Caithness cordially supported the Shelburne Cabinet. He considered Lord Shelburne as a true patriot, and an able statesman, deeply con-



versant with domestic as well as foreign policy. The talents, also, of the young Chancellor of the Exchequer, were early appreciated by my father. On the first appearance of Mr Pitt in Parliament, he predicted his future greatness ; and had a vivid recollection, above half a century afterwards, of the astonishment and applause with which an audience, accustomed to the most splendid efforts of eloquence, listened to the first oration from the son of Chatham. He was the more surprised at the genius displayed in that masterly speech, from seeing the new member unexpectedly called up by a simultaneous appeal from the House. It was, therefore, the more gratifying to receive, soon afterwards, a message from Mr Pitt, expressing a strong desire to make his acquaintance. A meeting was appointed at Lord Mahon's, through whom the message had been conveyed ; and in a conference of two hours, Mr Pitt explained his principles with such frankness and ability, that Mr Sinclair anticipated, with high satisfaction, the young and ardent statesman's advancement to power.

The first object of the Shelburne Ministry was to conclude a general peace. Among the circumstances which appeared to Mr Sinclair likely to impede the negotiation, was the general anxiety to retain possession of Gibraltar. This fortress was regarded as an indisputable evidence of our maritime supremacy, the key of the Mediterranean, a valuable depôt for British merchandise, and a necessary curb to bridle the House

of Bourbon. The place had sustained, but recently, one of the most formidable sieges in the annals of war ; and it was contended that a citadel, which British valour had so gloriously preserved, ought not to be surrendered by British diplomacy. No less than five tracts in prose, and one in verse, had at different times been written, urging the retention of this fastness. Mr Fox also had put forth some pithy sentences to the same effect. In reply to these various authorities, Mr Sinclair published "Impartial Considerations on the Propriety of Retaining Gibraltar." He animadverted on the inconsistency of his opponents, eager to give up the largest and most fertile territory ever possessed by a nation, and yet no less eager to retain a barren rock, to which an arbitrary and fictitious value had been unreasonably assigned. He insisted that Gibraltar, in our hands, became a link to bind the House of Bourbon together ; and that no peace could be lasting while this constant source of jealousy and ill-will remained. "What," he asked, "would England say to a treaty of peace that surrendered Portsmouth to the Spaniards?" He then remarks upon the uselessness of this naval station, and concludes by denouncing its expensiveness. "If," says he, "the war continues on account of that fortress for only a year, twelve or fifteen millions more must be added to the national debt, and eight or nine hundred thousand per annum to the national taxes."

In reference to this possession, his friend, Dr Adam Smith, remarks to him, in a letter dated 14th October, 1782 :—“ The real futility of all dominions, of which the defence is necessarily most expensive, and which contribute nothing either by revenue or military force to the general defence of the empire, and very little even to their own particular defence, is, I think, the subject upon which the public prejudices of Europe require most to be set right. In order to defend the barren rock of Gibraltar (to the possession of which we owe the union of France and Spain, contrary to the natural interests and inveterate prejudices of both countries, the important enmity of Spain, and the futile and expensive friendship of Portugal), we have now left our own coasts defenceless, and sent out a great fleet, to which any considerable disaster may prove fatal to our domestic security, and which, in order to effectuate its purpose, must probably engage a fleet of superior force.”

Early in 1783, the preliminary articles of peace with France, Spain, and America were laid before Parliament. These were hotly debated in the Commons, when resolutions condemnatory of the concessions made by the Ministry were proposed by Lord John Cavendish, supported by Mr Fox, who, to the astonishment of Europe, found an ally in Lord North. The debate led to the resignation of the Shelburne Ministry, who were succeeded by the Coalition.

Many of Lord North's oldest and most attached friends deserted him on this occasion. Some of them, and in particular Mr Dundas, in his time Lord Advocate of Scotland, had the honesty to remonstrate against a step involving such abandonment of all former principle. Gibbon, who had been himself a faithful adherent of that Minister, and who was profoundly acquainted with the politics of the time, introduced the subject at Lausanne to a friend of my father. "I know," says he, "that Dundas almost went upon his knees to dissuade his friend and patron from that ruinous alliance."

The chief argument employed by the Shelburne Ministry in vindication of the peace, was the presumed exhaustion of the public finances. The national debt, funded and unfunded, amounted to L.250,000,000, the interest on which was nearly L.9,500,000. The gloomy forebodings of financiers in Parliament were re-echoed out of doors. Pamphlets, in the same mournful tone, had for some time agitated the susceptible nerves of the public. Dr Price laboured, in a lengthened strain, to persuade the nation that it was on the eve of bankruptcy; and the Earl of Stair, to use the phrase of my father, "had for some time distinguished himself by an almost annual offering on the shrine of despondency." The propositions maintained by these and other writers of the same melancholy cast were, "first, that the annual gross income

of the country does not exceed, or will not yield much above twelve millions net yearly ; secondly, that the enormous sum of L.16,371,346, is but scantily sufficient to defray the national expense ; thirdly, that the unfunded debt is at least forty millions, the interest of which will amount to full two millions ; and, fourthly, that to raise additional taxes to the extent of L.4,371,346, were it necessary, is among the barest of all bare possibilities." Nothing could be more ill-timed than these lugubrious vaticinations. The articles of peace had not been ratified. Our enemies might yet be encouraged to renew the war, and our loss of public credit might disable us from raising means for our defence.

Mr Sinclair had made the subject of finance his peculiar study from an early period ; and he had now an opportunity to employ his knowledge in reviving the spirit of his countrymen. In his "Hints on the State of our Finances," he made his first appearance as an author in that department, and this early work ranks amongst the most useful of his numerous writings. The effect of it at that crisis was most salutary both at home and abroad, and more especially in Holland. Although the preliminaries of peace had been agreed upon with the other belligerent powers, it so happened that our negotiations with the Dutch were not so far advanced. Sir Joseph Yorke (afterwards Lord Dover), then ambassador at the Hague, found the "Hints" so valuable an assistance to him

in his diplomatic efforts, that he frequently declared, "It ought to have been printed in letters of gold."

The author sets out with remarking that the inhabitants of Great Britain had, for above a century, been alarming themselves with predictions of their own ruin. "These predictions," says he, "have been falsified by the event; and there is still reason to imagine that as we now ridicule the unfounded despondency of our ancestors, who thought that fifty or a hundred millions would reduce them to a state of bankruptcy; so our posterity will laugh at the folly, the ignorance, or the want of political skill and judgment in the statesmen and politicians of these times, who presume to assert that we have totally exhausted our resources, and that the period is at last arrived when the nation must destroy her debts, or her debts will destroy the nation." He proceeds to produce tables showing that the revenue derived from the property of the country, under the same scale of taxation, had continually increased; and had increased, not only in respect to the old taxes, but also in respect to taxes from time to time additionally imposed. On this first point (the national income), he exposes a false calculation into which the votaries of despondency had been betrayed. He then suggests retrenchments in the various branches of the national expenditure, the navy, the army, the ordinance, and miscellaneous charges. He proves, not only that the unfunded debt was likely to be smaller than his

opponents calculated, but that the public resources were underrated; that even by the unexampled demands of a profuse government the mine of national wealth was not exhausted, and that the springs of life and energy were in full action throughout the same body politic in which certain politicians saw only lifelessness and prostration. He remarks that the usual estimate of the national income in those times, namely 100 millions, was too low; but that, were it actually lower, were it only eighty millions, this sum, at the rate of four shillings in the pound, would yield an income to the state of sixteen millions,—a sum larger than the public service required, even in the opinion of the most pusillanimous alarmist.

The following is the letter of Dr Price to Mr Sinclair, on receiving from him a copy of his tract:—

“ May 1, 1783.

“ Dr Price presents his respectful compliments to Mr Sinclair, and returns him many thanks for the pamphlet which he received this morning, and which he read immediately with much attention. He thinks it written with much judgment and knowledge, as well as the best intentions; and though he cannot see things in the same favourable light that Mr Sinclair does, yet he thinks that he has corrected Lord Stair very justly.\*

\* Lord Stair's pamphlet had produced a great impression upon the public mind, and had reached a third edition.

“ Dr Price wishes for an opportunity to pay his respects to Mr Sinclair.”

The only particulars not sufficiently enlarged upon in this pamphlet were, the low state of public credit, and the scarcity of money. The author, therefore, put forth some further remarks, entitled, “ Memoir, containing a Plan for Re-establishing the Public Credit.” In this short paper he traces the low price of the funds to a variety of temporary causes : to the demand for specie in other countries ; to the removal of foreign deposits from our funds ; to the deficiency of the last year’s crop ; to the unsettled state of Ireland ; and to the increase of smuggling. He proceeds to animadvert upon the anomalous character of the sinking fund, which was at first established for paying off the national debt, but which, for a long period, had been continually appropriated to the expenses of the year. “ Instead of a fund so useless and uncertain, let us suppose,” says he, “ that the sum of one million *is invariably applied* for the purpose of diminishing the debt of the nation : that sum, according to Baron Maseres’ ingenious calculation, \* would discharge, in the short space of sixty years, a capital of nearly 317 millions of three per cents at the price of 75 per cent.” The remainder of the tract is employed in explaining and defending his positions, and he then concludes—“ Bad as our state

\* Vol. i. p. 294.



is in regard to revenue, we are indisputably in a better situation than our neighbours. If, therefore, it were possible for us, by carrying such a plan as I have stated into execution, to make the world in general place sufficient confidence in the stability of our public securities, the nation would soon arrive at a higher degree of power and opulence than it can ever boast of at present. All the unoccupied money of the Continent would find its way here; and with an accession of perhaps ten millions of circulating specie, our commerce and manufactures would revive, agriculture would be furnished with the best means of increase and improvement, and every branch of our public revenue would become more efficient and productive."

Two letters from Dr Price, to whom the scheme of a sinking fund is generally ascribed, are now before me. In one, the Doctor says, "I return you many thanks for your Memoir. I have, according to your desire, conveyed to M. Baron Maseres one of the copies you sent me. I have for many years, particularly in my appeal to the public on the national debt, the bank annuities, and the last tract on the finances, been endeavouring to recommend the *restoration* of the sinking fund, its inviolable appropriation, and the consignment of it to commissioners, in order to preserve it from alienation, as the best means of reducing the public debts, and of saving the kingdom from the danger with which they threaten it. I am

very glad to find that you have taken up the subject, and I heartily wish you more success than I have met with."

In his other letter the Doctor, after some remarks upon a sinking fund, and some financial calculations uninteresting to the general reader, demands, "Is it not then to be lamented that such a fund cannot be established, especially considering the other particular advantages which would attend its operations throughout their whole progress? In short, I am firmly of opinion, that if any thing can save the kingdom, it is this must do it. The nature of things does not admit of a more expeditious method of redeeming debts. I cannot help, therefore, wishing that you, sir, and the other able and virtuous members of the House of Commons, would unite in endeavouring to get the fund restored, and such regulations established as may give a sacredness like that of the *ark of God among the Jews, which could not be touched without death*. If this cannot be done, it would be best to strike out the name of the sinking fund from our accounts; for, in its present state, by covering deficiencies and tempting to extravagance, it is more an evil than a benefit. I cannot conclude without assuring you that I honour your abilities and views."

It is singular that the restoration of the sinking fund, a measure suggested at this time by the greatest speculative financiers, proposed in Parliament three years afterwards (1786) by Pitt, approved by Fox,

adopted by acclamation in the House, assented to by the King in person, to mark his own individual approbation, and received with distinguished favour by the whole country, should, by one of those strange mutations to which public opinion is liable, lose all its former popularity, and at last be swept away as a financial fraud and political delusion.

In consequence of these financial publications, Mr Sinclair acquired great influence with the monied interest of the country. He was one day visited by Sir James Esdaile, an intelligent banker of London, anxious to consult him as to the establishment of provincial banks throughout England, where they were at that time but little known. My father explained to him the benefit which the northern division of the island had long derived from well-organized banking arrangements, and encouraged him, so far as circumstances would admit, to introduce the Scottish system into the south. Sir James was thus induced to make a tour through several of the English counties, where he established about twenty branch banks in connexion with his house in the metropolis. This was the first step towards that great extension of the banking system, from which so much of the prosperity and greatness of the British empire has arisen. I shall afterwards have occasion to explain the measures by which these advantages, as Mr Sinclair conceived, might have been secured without the evils which unhappily

attended them of an excessive and insecure circulation.

On the 18th November, 1783, Mr Fox introduced his famous East India Bill, having for its object to secure for himself and his colleagues the patronage of India. The bill passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords, chiefly through the personal interference of the King, who embraced the opportunity to dismiss his Ministers, and place Mr Pitt at the head of a new Administration.

The following characteristic letter from Mr Pulteney, with reference to this important transaction, will be interesting to the reader, especially as it contains the opinion of the celebrated De Lolme, not merely upon general principles, but on the application of them to a particular measure :—

“ London, Dec. 24, 1783.

“ Dear Sinclair,

“ What you suggested to me in the House, came into my head when I had finished my business this evening, and I think it would be a politic measure, because it might operate as a means of making my pamphlet more generally attended to, which is of the last importance at this time ; for you may depend upon it, that the Foxites will never give up their plan, unless fairly drove from it by the general detestation of the people at large. I have got a letter from De

Lolme, which is much to the purpose. He agrees entirely with my idea, and I have letters from various quarters, informing me that they had no knowledge of the danger of the bill till they read my paper.

“ An honorary, unsolicited mark of approbation, bestowed on account of disinterested and important conduct, is what I think I may receive, without deviating from my public line; though, if it be expected to warp me in the least, it will fail of its effects.—I am, dear Sinclair, your most obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM PULTENEY.”

In the arduous struggle of the young Minister against a majority in the House of Commons, exasperated by defeat at the very moment when they felt sure of a decisive triumph, the Member for Caithness gave him his most cordial support. The importance of my father's services on this occasion appears from the two following letters, one from Mr Pitt himself, the other from his confidential friend, J. J. Hamilton, Esq. (afterwards Marquis of Abercorn):—

“ My dear Sir,

“ I find the enemy circulating, that I said in my speech I would resign, in case of an Address being carried. I take for granted, they think this impression would help them in the division, if they move it, on Monday. The fact is, as I recollect, that I said nothing one way or other on that supposition, but

challenged them either to *impeach* or address, if they were dissatisfied with my reasons for remaining after the resolutions. You will, I am sure, forgive my troubling you with this, for your *private use*, if you think it worth while to take any way of counteracting this idea. Perhaps you may have some opportunity to see how it is understood to-day.—I am, dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

W. PITT.

“ Saturday, Jan. 31, five o'clock.”

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am just come from Pitt, who is much obliged to you for your friendly support and assistance. We agree that Mr Luttrell's appearance in his favour on Monday will be a very desirable circumstance. There will probably be a division, but, at all events, the presence of independent and respectable friends will be in the highest degree desirable.—I am, dear Sir, in haste, but with real respect and regard, your most obedient and faithful servant,

J. J. HAMILTON.

“ Five o'clock.”

To these letters I may subjoin a short extract from another, written by Colonel Pennington, M.P., who appears to have been a member of the St Alban's Club :—“ If you can pique Mr Pitt not to desert the vessel timidly and interestedly at the very moment she

is about to strike, you will deserve infinite merit from your injured ruined country."

This unprecedented struggle between a first Minister of the Crown and a majority in the House of Commons, was terminated by a dissolution of Parliament on the 24th of March, 1784. As the rule already mentioned of alternate representation prevented Caithness from returning a Member to the next Parliament, Mr Sinclair was obliged to look out for a new seat.

Having some influence in the northern burghs, he commenced a canvass amongst them, but, as the issue was uncertain, secured, in the mean time, his return for the Cornish borough of Lestwithiel. The day of election at Kirkwall, on this occasion the returning burgh of the northern district, was considerably later than that of any town in England—a circumstance which led to the appearance of a very unexpected opponent. At the election for Westminster, Mr Fox, Lord Hood, and Sir Cecil Wray, had stood a contest severe beyond example, even on that arena of electioneering warfare.\* The poll was open from the

\* "It is hardly to be credited the exertions that were made to secure Mr Fox's election for Westminster, and the popular spirit that was raised for his support. A friend of mine, Lord Grimstone, who, being only an Irish Peer, was entitled to vote, went in his carriage to support Sir Cecil Wray. When he returned to his carriage, his coachman said to him, 'I hope your Lordship will now allow me to poll.'—'Certainly,' said Lord Grimstone, 'and for whom are you to vote?'—'Why, for Mr

1st of April to the 17th of May, when it was closed by the High Bailiff, who conceived that he had no right to protract the voting beyond the day on which the writs were made returnable. Lord Hood was at the head of the poll, and Mr Fox had a majority of 235 over Sir Cecil Wray ; but, as many of Mr Fox's votes were suspected to be illegal, Sir Cecil demanded a scrutiny, which the returning officer was induced to grant. While this scrutiny was pending, no return for Westminster could be made ; and as by this time all the seats in England were pre-occupied, Mr Fox had no alternative but to procure, if possible, through the influence of his friend Mr Thomas Dundas, his election for the northern burghs.\* The Dundas influence prevailed, but if my father could have proved (what he had little doubt was the case) that his opponent was ineligible, he himself, of necessity, became entitled to the seat. Here, however, Mr Sinclair's characteristic generosity prevailed. Attached as he was to Mr Pitt, he declined to gratify the Minister on this occasion. He considered the scrutiny a vindictive measure, designed merely to involve Mr Fox in

Fox, to be sure, my Lord.'—To which Lord Grimstone very good-naturedly replied, ' I wish, John, that you had told me sooner, and we might then have paired off.' "—*Correspondence*, p. 95, vol. i.

\* Mr Fox's flight to the Orkneys was the subject of an amusing caricature by Gilray, who represents the English orator in a philabeg, haranguing the citizens of Kirkwall on the blessings of liberty and cheap government.



ruinous expenses, and to keep him out of Parliament. He deferred, therefore, presenting his petition till the scrutiny should be over. His conduct was much eulogized by the Opposition at the time ; but, no sooner was their leader seated for Westminster, than they dropped their former tone of panegyric, and never afterwards did justice to a disinterestedness seldom exemplified in the practice of politicians.

Having lost his election for the Northern Burghs, Mr Sinclair took his seat for Lestwithiel. He was preparing afterwards to surprise his constituents, by going in person to return them thanks, but was given to understand that such a step would excite jealousy in the patron of the borough. It happened, however, that some members of the corporation visited the metropolis, and took the opportunity of waiting upon their member. They expressed their satisfaction, that so popular an author, even from the farthest corner of the North, had been recommended to them by their patron. One of them, a little man, contemplating my father's tall figure, added, that they were glad to be able to *look up* to their representative. " I assure you," answered Mr Sinclair, " I never shall *look down* on my constituents."

I have already mentioned two financial works published by my father. The success of these encouraged him to undertake the arduous task of writing a " History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire." His object was to trace the public revenue

and expenditure of England from the remotest periods down to his own times ; subjoining a similar enquiry into the revenue of Scotland and Ireland, together with an analytical view of public revenue in general. No financial work, on a scale so comprehensive, had been ever before attempted in any country ; and in the case of Great Britain, from the complicated state of her finances, no ordinary patience, acuteness, and perseverance, would be necessary to investigate their origin, and to explain their details. These difficulties, however, instead of discouraging, only proved incitements to his industrious and energetic mind. He left no source of information, ancient or modern, foreign or domestic, unexplored. His list of authorities, including historians, antiquaries, financiers, biographers, and economists, amounts to 713, from the huge folios of Marckgraff and Postlethwaite, which nobody thinks of reading, down to those small ephemeral pamphlets, which few readers take the trouble of preserving.

To show the importance of right ideas on the subject of public revenue, the author begins by describing the connexion between the revenues and the power of a state, and by showing the national weakness which results, when taxes are either excessive in their amount, or partial in their distribution. He remarks, that war in our days is as much a contest of treasure as of arms, and that unhappily the great financial discovery of modern times, namely, the fund-

ing system, has been abused into the means of making posterity pay indefinitely for the ambition and improvidence of their ancestors. This system, he observes, had been carried further in Great Britain than in any other country ; and he concludes, that although the state could still bear the burden laid upon it, yet additional incumbrances might be so recklessly accumulated, as to force upon the nation the alternative of infamy or of ruin.

He fixes upon the Revolution in 1688 as the great financial era which introduced a complete change into the management of our public revenue. The expenses of the government, before that period, had chiefly been defrayed by the receipts from crown-lands, and ordinary fiscal resources. An extraordinary tax was seldom imposed, and imposed only as a temporary grant, for a few years or for life, to the reigning monarch. He compares the state, since that epoch, to a great corporation, extending its views beyond the exigencies of the moment, forming plans of remote as well as of immediate profit, and borrowing funds to acquire, cultivate, or defend distant colonies, in hopes of reaping ultimate advantage in full proportion to the outlay. " At one time," he says, " it protects a nation whose trade it considers as beneficial, at another it engages in a war, lest the commerce of a neighbour and a rival should be too great ; in short, it proposes to itself a plan of perpetual accumulation and aggrandizement, which, according as it

is well or ill conducted, must either end in the possession of an extensive and a powerful empire, or in total ruin."

Mr Sinclair contemplated heavy or unequal taxation as among the most grievous evils by which a people could be oppressed. "Their industry," he says, "diminishes, their wealth necessarily disappears, their number decreases, and the greater the occasion they have for their resources, the fewer they will actually enjoy." He considered the lavish expenditure of Great Britain since the establishment of her liberties as one of the worst features of her policy; and traces with regret the gradual increase of the national debt from the small sum of L.664,263, with which the country was burdened under James II., to the vast aggregate of L.247,833,236, for which the nation was responsible at the close of the American war.

It would be out of place to give more than a general view of this elaborate performance. To trace the various sources of revenue under each sovereign, and to enumerate the taxes levied, and the produce of each, would be to transcribe three volumes. Suffice it to say, that the work was received with distinguished favour by the public; passed through three editions; and became a text-book for students of political economy, both at home and in foreign countries. Many persons, whose names have since be-

come eminent in political history, derived the elements of their financial knowledge from my father's pages. Some of my readers will feel a melancholy interest in learning, that, amidst other preparatory studies for the highest station in this empire, the late lamented Princess Charlotte of Wales studied the "History of the Public Revenue" with great attention and satisfaction. Sir John Macpherson, in a letter to my father, mentions that she "left memoranda relative to several of Sir John Sinclair's financial works, in the regular journal which she wrote with extracts from the books which she had perused.\* The Rev. Dr Gregory communicates a fact of a similar kind.† "It is many years ago," says he, "since, in company with the present Prime Minister of Russia, I read attentively the whole of your elaborate work on the Revenue of Great Britain, and can say with truth, that I never read a work so clear and so complete. I have not a doubt but that the extraordinary young man I have alluded to, experiences at this moment great benefit from the attention he then bestowed upon it." The American Minister, Mr Rush, in the narration of his residence at the Court of London,‡ after having mentioned that Mr Coke of Norfolk

\* Sir John Macpherson advises my father to call at Porter's the bookseller in Pall-Mall, where the journals were binding, and where, on mentioning his name, they would be shown to him.

† Letter, dated West Ham, Essex, Feb. 21, 1805.

‡ P. 285, printed in 1833.

considered Sir John Sinclair's Code of Agriculture as the most useful work upon that subject, has the following passage respecting the History of the Revenue :—" In a conversation with Mr Vansittart, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, I asked him what work was regarded as containing the best account of the British finances. He said it was difficult to arrive at a knowledge of them from any single work ; but, on the whole, he considered Sir John Sinclair's, for the period it embraced, as the most satisfactory. These," he adds, " are high testimonials."

Mr Ewart, one of our ablest foreign Ministers, in a letter, dated Berlin, 1st March, 1788, writes thus :—" I am impatient to see the second volume of your History of the Finances of Great Britain, whose actual flourishing state must furnish you with such important proofs of the principles you so long ago advanced respecting the favourable prospects of her resources and revenue. How peculiarly prosperous is our situation in this as well as in every other respect, when compared with that of our rival ; and while our Administration has gained the respect of all Europe, and rises in estimation, the French Cabinet continue to expose their weakness, inconsistency, and misconduct." Necker bestowed the highest praise on this work. Mirabeau informed the author that he proposed translating it into French. The Abbé Morellet eulogized it warmly. Marniere of Ham-  
burgh also, in his " Essay on Commercial Credit," has

these words :—“ Son ouvrage forme sans contredit le plus grand recueil de faits interressans sur les finances qui existe en Europe.” The same great financial authority adds ;—“ L’histoire du revenue public de la Grande Bretagne est trop connue pour que je m’arrête à en faire l’éloge ; je me contenterai de dire qu’elle donne le detail de toutes les operations de finances, que la nation de l’Europe qui a su procurer à l’état le plus grand revenue et le plus grand credit, a faites depuis une siècle ; et que l’auteur en montre les avantages ou les inconveniens par des observations dont la sagesse et la sagacité justifient sa grande reputation.”

In the course of this work, Mr Sinclair introduces an interesting comparison between the resources of Great Britain and France ; depicting in strong colours the embarrassment of the latter country, and the impossibility of raising its revenues to a level with the exigencies of its government. He points out an annual defect of ten millions of livres in the national income ; and remarks on the anomalous fact, that an arbitrary king, though invested with uncontrolled authority over the property, persons, and lives of his subjects, is himself subject to one insurmountable limitation, being unable, with safety, to impose a new tax. My father much doubted the stability of the French monarchy ; and, in the following passage, might be said prophetically to anticipate the approaching revolutionary convulsions. “ The Court of France,

like every other arbitrary administration, is nothing but a faction confederated together for the government of that great and powerful kingdom; and this faction is upheld, and receives perpetual accessions, from the hopes that every individual belonging to it entertains of having some share in the plunder of the nation. But if ever those hopes are destroyed—if frugality is ever carried to any extreme—if all expectations of sharing in the spoils of the public are annihilated, the power of the faction would quickly cease, and a revolution would be the necessary consequence.”

“ Besides, such has been the impolitic conduct of the French Cabinet, in supporting the independence of North America, in suffering the natives of that country to spread their wild ideas of republicanism throughout every corner of the kingdom; and, indeed so much have the bold compositions written in this country, in favour of liberty and the legal rights of mankind, been circulated there, that the seeds of important political changes seem to be sown, which greater restrictions on the royal bounty would have a tendency to accelerate.”

Very different were my father's anticipations with respect to the prospects of his own country. In his appendix he introduces an amusing article, entitled, “ an antidote to despondency, or progressive opinions from respectable authority, tending to prove that the nation was actually undone prior to the Revo-



lution in 1688, and that it has remained in a continued state of ruin or decay ever since that memorable era." There are twenty-one authorities, each, as a prophet of plagues, rivalling or surpassing his predecessor. "A kind of common consumption hath crowded upon us," says the author of *Britannia Languens* in 1680. "No new improving manufacture is to be heard of in England, but that of periwigs," says the writer of a discourse on the growth of England in 1689. "By this revolution we have brought on the utter beggary of ourselves, by the decay of traffick, and unsupportable taxes. England must pay the piper," says Sir R. W. in 1694. "We have upon us all the visible marks of a declining people," says Dr Davenant in 1699. "We are almost driven to the very brink of destruction," says the writer of a letter touching the embezzlement of the kingdom's treasure in 1710. "By mismanagement or villany we are reduced to a terrible ebb," says J. Gordon in 1722. "Infinite swarms of locusts and caterpillars in office not only prey on the vitals of industry, but render even our liberties precarious," says the *Craftsman* in 1736. "We have now reached the goal of national ruin," says David Hume in 1776. "The state is a bankrupt, and those who have trusted their all to the national faith are in danger of becoming (I die pronouncing it) beggars," says John Earl of Stair in 1783. I am unwilling to overwhelm the reader with the equally doleful views and anticipations of Smith,

Kames, Price, and others on the list of mourners. Great Britain, however, survived ; and my father was convinced that similar predictions made by his cotemporaries of her prospective decay would be similarly falsified by her future prosperity.

I shall conclude this account of the history of the revenue, with the following singular letter from Lord Hailes, in which his Lordship justly guards against the error of estimating the value of a division of the kingdom by the amount of its contributions to the public revenue.

“ Sir,

“ I was favoured with a copy of your book just at the sitting down of the Session, when my avocations prevented me from taking notice of any thing foreign to them.

“ Your plan is great, and it will require all your abilities, knowledge, and perseverance to complete it.

“ In the course of your work, might I adventure to give any hint to one so much better informed than I am, all *minutiæ* of shillings and pence ought to be omitted : to give a notion of taxes, produce, &c. odd hundreds serve no purpose. Raynal, by his fractional accuracy, makes the ignorant wonder at him, but does not add to their knowledge.

“ It seems to me, that your intended supplement as to Scotland and Ireland, will rather hurt than benefit your work. Could you ascertain *the value of a*

*man given to the state for military service*, you might show what those poor and brave nations contributed to the public ; without this, the English vulgar, that is, ninety-nine out of a hundred, will try their importance by the *rule of three* ; the result will be arithmetically right, but politically wrong beyond calculation. — I am, Sir, with great regard, your most obedient humble servant,

DAVID DALRYMPLE.

“ Newhailes, 26th Aug. 1785.”

This year (1785) my father sustained a severe family affliction in the death of Mrs Sinclair, to whom he was most affectionately attached, and in whose society he had enjoyed uninterruptedly the happiness of domestic life. She left two daughters, Hannah, authoress of a popular work on the principles of the Christian faith ; and Janet, married to the late Sir James Colquhoun, of Luss, Baronet.

Mr Sinclair felt the loss so severely, that he at first proposed retiring altogether from public life, and addressed a letter upon the subject to the Premier, to which Mr Pitt returned the following considerate and amiable reply.

“ Downing Street, May 17, 1785.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I feel very sensibly the kind proof of your zeal

and friendship at such a moment, and truly lament the unfortunate cause which deprives us at present of your assistance. As far as numbers are in question, a single vote, though always of some consequence, is, I trust, not now so material as once seemed possible. I am not, however, the less thankful to you for the accommodation you propose, though very glad to think it unnecessary.—Believe me, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

“ W. PITT.”

In the month of October my father went down to Brighton, where Mr Pitt happened at that time to be residing, and was received by the Minister and his friends with great sympathy and kindness. In a letter to Lady Janet Sinclair, he says, that in case he continued in Parliament he was promised office; “but,” adds he, “I have it still in view to retire. Mr Pitt paid me many compliments on the success of my literary labours.”

In the month of December Mr Sinclair, by a short excursion to the Continent, endeavoured to remove or mitigate the depression under which he laboured. He set out accordingly for Paris, during the Christmas recess. He was fortunate enough to travel in company with some ingenious persons, among whom was Montgolfier, the inventor of balloons. Montgolfier stated, that his invention had been suggested

to him by the discoveries of Dr Black, showing the difference in point of weight between various gases.

At Paris my father dined *en famille* with Necker, then Prime Minister. The ladies of the family seemed to have resolved on giving their Scottish guest an agreeable reception. He found Madame Necker reading Blair's Sermons; and Mademoiselle Necker, afterwards the celebrated De Staël, playing "Lochaber no more" on the piano.

He was also frequently in company with Buffon, at this time betraying somewhat of senile garrulity, but not to a disagreeable excess. The great naturalist did justice to the taste and science of England. "Milton," he said, "was the greatest of all poets; "and the Newtonian theory must last for ever." He presented my father with his picture, a compliment which the latter highly estimated.

At Paris the traveller procured information upon two subjects of public interest. The first had reference to the improved machinery invented by Mr Droz of Switzerland, and at that time unknown in England. He prevailed on the inventor to make Mr Boulton of Birmingham acquainted with his plans; and was thus the means of introducing a superior coinage into the British mint.

The other discovery was still more valuable. Having become intimate with M. Clouet, director of the royal establishment for making gunpowder at Paris, he induced him to explain some very important pro-

cesses recently discovered in the manufacture of that article.\*

On his return to England, Mr Sinclair, whose domestic affliction does not appear to have abated his desire of public usefulness, being anxious to introduce the last named improvement, entered into communication with the Duke of Richmond, then Master-General of the Ordnance. He stated the process confidentially to his friend Bishop Watson, Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge, requesting his company at the Board of Ordnance, that he might explain scientifically the nature of the process. The Bishop, not being acquainted with the Duke, at first declined. Mr Sinclair, however, undertook to apprise his Grace of their visit. The new process being found to answer, was adopted by the Government.

It is curious that Bishop Watson in his Memoirs, giving a grave account of this transaction, omits my father's name entirely, and claims all the merit to himself. This was not fair. His estimate, however, of the importance of the information thus communicated is worth transcribing. Having mentioned that

\* The process was to make charcoal by distilling the wood in close cyinders. From experiments made by Major (afterwards Sir William Congreve), it appears, that the cylinder powder threw out a ball of 68 pounds weight 273 feet, while the same mortar, at an equal elevation, and charged with an equal weight of ordinary gunpowder, threw a ball of the same weight only 172 feet. In this experiment the strength of the cylinder powder, estimated by the horizontal range, was to that of the best ordinary powder as 100 to 63.

the saving to the country effected by this discovery amounted to L.100,000 per annum, he proceeds,—  
“ I have never enquired whether this information is correct, nor, if it should turn out to be so, have I any intention of applying for a reward. My country is welcome to my services in every way; but if, in the vicissitudes incident to all families, my posterity should by misfortune, not occasioned by vice or indiscretion, be reduced to beggary, I would advise them to petition the House of Commons for a remuneration. They may do it with a just confidence of being listened to.” \*

Willing to put the most favourable construction on the proceedings of the right reverend chemist, my father attributed his mistatement to forgetfulness of the actual facts of the case, when he wrote the anecdotes of his life. My father might have taken any

\* Anecdotes of Bishop Watson's Life by himself, p. 149. Various documents from M. Clouet as to gunpowder and salt-petre, dated 1785, are now before me. The following note from Major Congreve is curious in relation to this topic:—

“ Major Congreve's compliments to Sir John Sinclair, and informs him that he has this day sent a sample of English salt-petre (refined upon Dr George Fordyce's principles) for a comparative trial with the French samples. Major C. sent the English samples to his Grace the Duke of Richmond, upon a supposition that his Grace would send them to Sir John.

“ *Charlton, Thursday morning, 25th May, 1786.*

“ P.S.—I am to set out for the Royal Powder Mills at Fever-sham to-morrow morning, and shall be happy to be honoured with any commands from my Lord Bishop of Llandaff.”

other eminent man of science to the Board of Ordnance, but preferred the Bishop of Llandaff, in the hope of modifying that unfriendly relation in which he stood to the ministers of that day.

It was not long after this transaction that Mr Pitt, in addition to former marks of esteem, procured for his friend and supporter the honour of a Baronetcy. Some negotiations had been going on upon the subject, but had been impeded by the request of Mr Sinclair that the patent should include the male posterity of his daughters, as he had at that time no son. There were scarcely any precedents for this peculiarity. Nothing but the great desire of the Minister to oblige a valuable partisan could have induced him to depart from ordinary usage. The following letter is among the few documents I find in reference to this transaction.

“ Putney Heath, Nov. 2, 1784.

“ My dear Sir,

“ The rambling life I have led in my holidays, with some occasional mixture of business, made me defer writing to you from day to day. At last, as is too often the case, I have grown almost too much ashamed of my omission to correct it; but as I find you are still fixed at a distance, I cannot any longer defer thanking you for your letters. I shall with great pleasure contribute every assistance in my power, if circumstances will admit of the limitation you wish of



the title of Baronet ; and I shall be happy to converse with you upon it when we meet, which I hope will be before long. I wish much to know your present speculations on our finance. Our prospects of it improve. Most of the particulars you mention in one of your letters may, I hope, be easily ascertained. While we are thinking of improving the moments of peace, the state of the Continent is growing every day more uncertain. I am, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

“ W. PITT.”

### CHAPTER III.

**Remarks on Travelling—Denmark—Count Bernstorff—Professor Thorkelin—Sweden—Gustavus—Russia—Empress Catherine—Princess Daschkow—Grand Duke Paul—Moscow—Count Romanzoff—Poland—Stanislaus—Tepper the Banker—Austria—Emperor Joseph—Prussia—Frederic William—Prince Harry—Mirabeau—Hanover—Duke of York—Holland—French Intrigues—Flanders—George III.—Lord Chancellor Thurlow—Presidents Washington and Jefferson.**

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR considered an acquaintance with foreign countries obtained by personal observation, indispensable to the proficiency of a British statesman. He was shocked to observe that many gentlemen of political eminence could hardly read French ; and that few of them could speak it fluently. Even those who went abroad did not, he conceived, turn to account the opportunities of observation afforded them. He describes, in his journal, a noble Lord, on his arrival at Berlin, thanking God that he had reached a town where there was nothing to be seen—no pictures, no library, no museum ; and a Baronet at Vienna expressing horror at the thought of dining with the people of the countries he visited.

“Would to heavens,” exclaimed the fashionable tourist, “that I was in a place where there were no natives!” This foolish speech, to my father’s indignation, was often repeated in his hearing as being full of wit and cleverness. He lamented that Mr Pitt had never been abroad, and was therefore imperfectly acquainted with the policy and intrigues of foreign courts. Hence the ill success of all his schemes for uniting the continental powers in permanent coalition.

Having been obliged to shorten his last excursion, Sir John resolved to make his next tour more extensive, and to take advantage of the Parliamentary recess in 1786 for that purpose. Before setting out he communicated his intention to Mr Pitt, and received from him the following reply :—

“Hollwood Hill, May 29th, 1786.

“Dear Sir,

“I regret much that I lose the pleasure of seeing you before your departure. I heartily wish you a great deal of entertainment, and a great deal of information, which, I believe, is more your object, and in which I am happy to consider myself as so much interested. You may always depend on my services, on any occasion where I am at liberty, and where they can be of any use to you. The revenue papers shall be got for you, if possible. I shall be happy to

hear from you whenever you are at leisure. Believe me, with great truth and regard,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Yours most sincerely,

“ W. PITT.”

Before his departure, my father had so distinctly marked out his route, that he not only fixed the places he was to visit, but determined the very day of his arrival at each. Having provided himself with above a hundred letters of introduction, he departed from Gravesend on the 30th day of May.\* He set out with an impression, which every traveller ought to cultivate, that in all countries a man of sense will discover something useful; that no country is without something in its climate or soil, its manners or constitution, worthy of attention; that the traveller should consider himself as a child, entitled to ask any question for the purpose of acquiring knowledge; that regarding himself in some measure as the representative of his native land, he should never forfeit self-respect, but should act towards foreigners with liberality and spirit, even suffering himself to be cheated, as tourists usually are, with as good a grace as possible; and above all, not disgracing himself with mean vices:

\* The following paragraph appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Courant of the 5th of June:—“ London, Thursday, June 1st. Yesterday morning Sir John Sinclair set off from the India office, Whitehall, in the capacity of commercial negotiator to the northern courts on the continent.”

that in his progress he should omit no opportunity of procuring specimens of foreign workmanship for the improvement of manufactures at home ; and finally, that he should discover, if possible, every secret, mechanical or scientific, which gives superiority to its possessor, whether in processes of philosophical experiment, or in works of useful industry.

During his passage from Gravesend to Gottenburgh, our zealous and patriotic traveller drew up, under the several heads of agriculture, commerce, government, revenue, military and naval force, &c. a series of questions, amounting to some hundreds, respecting the countries he proposed to visit. His intention was not to rest satisfied in any instance without personally investigating each of these particulars. He landed at Gottenburgh on the 16th of June, and on the 22d reached Copenhagen, by way of Elsinore. As the state of Northern Europe above fifty years ago might not now be very interesting to the general reader, I shall go over the ground with rapidity, omitting for the most part all minute description of natural scenery or buildings, and confining my task to characteristic notices of individuals, or of nations, which, as developements of human nature, must be equally interesting at all times.

As no Court was held during Sir John's stay at Copenhagen, he had no opportunity of being presented to the Danish Royal Family. This he particularly regretted afterwards, as Frederick the Prince

Royal, when King of Denmark, caused the "Code of Agriculture" to be translated into Danish, at the public expense. Sir John visited Count Bernstorff, at his magnificent castle, near the metropolis; and formed a friendship with him which extended to another generation; for I find in a letter, dated 1800, the then young Count expressing the hope that Sir John Sinclair would continue to the son the same regard which he had manifested towards the father. My father considered Count Bernstorff an able and active Minister, who would keep the envoys from his Court continually on the alert. Among other acquaintances formed in Denmark was Professor Thorkelin, a native of Ireland, whose exertions had contributed largely towards reviving the literary character of that country. Among several letters from the Professor, I see one in which he mentions "The Statistical account of Scotland" as having given rise to a new society in Norway, who united themselves in order to make the existing state of that long-forgotten kingdom publicly known. In another communication he makes interesting reference to the antiquities of Scotland. "I have searched for papers in his Majesty's archives relative to the unfortunate death of King Henry; the affairs of the beautiful Queen of Scots; and the accusations against the Earl of Bothwell. At length I have been so fortunate as to collect a vast number of state papers concerning this business. Among those is a judicial

inquisition over the Earl, made in Bergen ; and the correspondence of the French Ministers, the learned Dancée, or Danceus, is most interesting. It will be proved by this that the French King, through his interest in this Court, prevented the Earl being delivered into the hands of his enemies. There are likewise many letters authentic from the Regents and nobility in Scotland."

My father lamented the despotism established in Denmark, and ascribed to loss of liberty the degeneracy and political insignificance of that people. "The nobles," he says, "are luxurious, the commons idle, and the peasants slaves. At the same time, there exists among the Danes all the conscious pride of ancient glory. They are jealous of their country's honour ; they cannot hear the least reflection upon it, and in particular are anxious to be thought a braver, richer, more polite and learned people, than their neighbours the Swedes ; a comparison of the two nations, to the disadvantage of the latter, is, to a Danish ear, the most agreeable of all topics. The two nations hate each other ; but the Danes are more inveterate." He was of opinion that the Danes would act wisely in diminishing the number of their holidays. "About St John's Day, in particular," he says (24th of June), "the people are idle for three weeks."

Having resolved to see the whole north of Europe in the course of about seven months, our traveller soon completed his enquiries regarding Denmark ;

and we find him suddenly at Stockholm on the 11th of July, employing himself with indefatigable industry, in visiting whatever was most interesting in that capital and its vicinity.

On the 22d, being the Queen's "name day," a court festival was held at the country palace of Dronningholm, on which occasion he was presented to King Gustavus; and in the evening attended the royal party to the French opera. The performance was Molière's "Malade Imaginaire," and tolerably acted. He was much disgusted, however, with some absurdities and indecencies, very inappropriate in a piece performed in honour of a queen. He wished that some of the apparatus employed in clinical surgery had been less prominent on the stage. After this singular representation, which was over at an early hour, the King and royal family supped in public. During the entertainment, his Majesty called up to him in succession the Foreign Ministers and strangers at the Court. The Chevalier Sinclair was summoned among the former, being named after the Dutch, and before the Spanish envoy. The King enquired the particulars of his journey, adding, "I have a great regard for Scotland; many of the first families in my kingdom came originally from your country. Three of your own name are Barons of Sweden." \*

\* My father, after he returned to England from this tour, carried on a correspondence for nine years with Baron Sinclair, who requested assistance towards establishing his pedigree, as



His Majesty afterwards observed, that Dunall (or M'Dowall), whom at the last diet he had appointed Landt Marechal, was of Scotch extraction. The King might have mentioned that Baron Fersen (properly M'Pherson) held the same office at two of the preceding diets. The number of Swedish noblemen, descended from Scottish ancestors, is estimated at above fifty. They are chiefly descendants of Scottish officers, who served with distinction under the great Gustavus Adolphus during his German campaigns.

Turning to Sir Thomas Wroughton, at that time our Minister at the Swedish Court, the King enquired, whether the Chevalier Sinclair supported the Administration of Mr Pitt. Being answered in the affirmative, he expressed his satisfaction, adding, with some emotion,—“ I am not fond of those who are perpetually wrangling with their Sovereign and disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the country.” Gustavus, educated in despotic principles, did not understand the constitutional opposition which, without endangering the prerogatives of the Crown, may be offered in a free state to the Ministry of the day.

a preliminary to claiming the title and estates of the Lords Sinclair. During this long epistolary intercourse, the formal appellations of “ Sir,” and “ My Lord,” were changed into “ My dear Cousin,” and “ My much-esteemed Kinsman.” It may be added, that one of Sir John's own ancestors, John of Brims, has been already mentioned in my introductory chapter, as having served in the Swedish campaigns in Germany.

The King with great civility declared, that if the Chevalier had remained longer in Sweden, he would have endeavoured to make his stay as agreeable as possible. Among other questions which Gustavus put to Sir Thomas Wroughton, was the somewhat strange and abrupt interrogation,—“ When shall we have another maritime war? We long much for one in Sweden.” It hence appears that his Majesty, though not well acquainted with the British constitution, sufficiently understood the advantages to a neutral power of trading between belligerents.

The display of royal luxury at this banquet was so adapted to fascinate even a philosopher, that my father observed to a Swiss savant, M. Trembley, who stood near him,—“ Is it to be wondered at that such scenes should turn the heads of most men?” Trembley would not have assented to this remark had he been allowed to lift the veil of futurity; but would have answered, with Solon—“ Wait, till you see the end;” for within six years Gustavus was assassinated.†

Sumptuous, however, as this banquet was, I find that, as far as regarded the Foreign Ministers and their

\* A Swedish merchant very honestly confessed that he was *ashamed* of the money he had made during that golden era (as he termed it), the American war.

† My father long continued to correspond with Trembley, who, in 1793, writes to him:—“ My country is overrun by the French, and nothing now remains for me but to turn school-master, and see whether I cannot live as well as Dionysius the Tyrant did at Corinth.”

friends, the sense of sight only was regaled; for it seems they afterwards adjourned to the Countess of Piper's, where a substantial entertainment awaited them. From the house of this lady they did not take their departure till so late, or rather so early an hour, that it was two in the morning before they reached their homes.

Sir John afterwards dined with the Russian Minister, M. de Marcoff; the entertainment was sumptuous; the whole *corps diplomatique*, together with all the foreigners in the capital, were present. The conversation having turned on the Baronet's intended voyage across the Baltic, some one asked whether he was ever seasick. "The English never are," said the French ambassador, the Marquis de Pons, in complimentary allusion to the maritime enterprise of England. Notwithstanding this clever *impromptu*, M. de Pons was not considered by my father a man of much ability; and he thence inferred that France took no great interest at that time in the politics of Sweden. The contrast between the Marquis and his host was striking. Marcoff was a true Russian patriot, a man of great ability, affable manners, and profound knowledge of European politics.

During his stay at Stockholm, Sir John made a journey to Upsala, and visited the University, in company with the professor of anatomy, Dr Murray, a gentleman of Scottish extraction. "Here," he says, "I trod with emotion the small botanic garden ho-

noured with the footsteps of Linnæus." He returned the same day to the capital, after having accomplished, to the credit of Swedish posting, a journey of one hundred miles within four-and-twenty hours.

At Stockholm, our indefatigable traveller visited the Exchange, where, in order to perpetuate a politic horror of Danish rule, an old house is kept up, in the corner of which might be seen a cannon-ball, fired, as was alleged, at Christian IV. of Denmark, while glutting his eyes from the adjoining window with the massacre of the Swedish nobility. At the new arsenal (the old one, to the scandal of a military people, was then filled with opera dresses), Sir John saw the bloody garments of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII., and convinced himself, after much enquiry, that the latter was not killed by a pistol-shot from one of his own soldiers, but by a cannon-ball of the enemy. The mask taken from his face after death, shows that all the bones in front of the head were shattered; and, in a golden box at the Treasury, the fatal ball was still preserved, which produced so great a change on the politics of Europe.

My father was much surprised, and in some degree disgusted with the subserviency of the Swedes to France. Not only did they adopt French politics, but French customs and phraseology; and speaking of the Crown Prince, would call him "Notre Dauphin." Some Frenchmen with more vivacity than prudence, alleged that France held Sweden and

Turkey like a brace of bull-dogs, ready to be let loose at pleasure upon her enemies. Sir John was of opinion that Denmark and Sweden were kingdoms on too small a scale, in proportion to the magnitude of the neighbouring powers; and that neither of the two, was likely to enjoy security, till by treaty or conquest they should become united. Both states, he conceived, maintained establishments out of all proportion to their ways and means.

After a boisterous passage of seven days, during which, contrary to the polite anticipations of M. de Pons, the voyager suffered much from sea-sickness, he arrived on the first of August at Riga; where he received much attention from the Count de Browne, Governor-General of Livonia. The history of this nobleman is singular. He was of Irish extraction, and came to Russia without a shilling. In early life he was taken prisoner by the Turks, who sold him for a slave. He was redeemed by the interference of the French Ambassador at the Ottoman Court; and on the recovery of his liberty, having returned to the Russian service, rose to a high rank, and amassed a considerable fortune. On his marriage to a second wife, to prevent dissatisfaction in the children of the first, he divided his entire property among them, and began to make a second fortune. He was understood to have acquired at the time of Sir John's visit, six thousand a-year in land, and a hundred thousand pounds in money; which, in order to have

his choice of the best mortgages, he lent at five per cent, being one per cent below the ordinary interest. Speaking of the three nations that compose the British empire, the Count remarked: "I have seen many English fools, and many Irish come out of their respective countries, but never yet one fool from Scotland." In illustration of Scottish sagacity, Count Browne related a curious anecdote of one Grant, a Scotsman in the service of the great Frederick of Prussia. Grant was observed one day fondling the King's favourite dog. "Are you fond of dogs?" said Frederick. "No, please your Majesty," replied Grant, "but we Scots have a saying that it is right to secure a friend at Court." "You are a sly fellow," said the monarch; "recollect for the future that you have no occasion at this court for any friend but myself." Grant rose afterwards with great rapidity, and was intrusted with the command of the most important fortresses in the kingdom. Sir John lamented the slavery and oppression of the Livonian peasantry, which had lately goaded them to insurrection. He ascertained with great pleasure, that descendants of Scotch families were not only common in Sweden, but also in Livonia and Estonia. Among others, Douglasses, Fersens (or M'Phersons), Flemings, and a few Sinclairs. This circumstance is easily accounted for, as these provinces had belonged to Sweden during the Thirty Years' War.

The baronet's first specimen of the miseries of Rus-

sian travelling on the way to St Petersburg was most disheartening. His journey of three days and three nights was sometimes through deep sand, and sometimes over trunks of trees sprinkled scantily with gravel. To compensate for slow progress through the sand, the carriage was hurried over the trees, not only with a rapidity dangerous to the springs of the vehicle, but to the bones of the traveller. At Narva he stopped to admire the scenery, and inspect the ground ever memorable for the defeat of Peter the Great. At Tichirkowitz, he diverged from the main road to see Peterhoff; a palace execrated by history as the scene where the worst of those tragic deeds was perpetrated, of which the annals of Russia afford so many dark examples. It was here that the guilty Catherine first sacrificed her husband's crown to her ambition, and then his life to her security. Voltaire pointedly remarks, that all governments have some limit, and that the sovereign power in Russia is limited by assassination. When Sir John was at Peterhoff, no allusion could be made to this bloody transaction; no enquiry attempted; the same power which with impunity had perpetrated the crime, prevented its exposure and condemnation. The terrible reminiscences of Peterhoff had induced the Empress to choose for her summer residence the palace of Tzarskoesels.

At Peterhoff, and in other parts of Russia, Sir John found encampments of gipsies, and was surprised to learn that these Oriental wanderers lived in

tents even during winter, though the thermometer must be sometimes 40 degrees below zero. It was remarkable that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood had so little of the suspicion which we attach to them, as to have hardly any fastenings to their windows, or even to their doors.

My father describes the approach from Peterhoff to St Petersburg as a road of magnificent breadth, lined on either side with villas, which looked down upon the spacious gulf of Finland, and were occupied by the principal nobility and foreign ambassadors. Among them was the residence of the Turkish Minister, constructed after the fashion of his country, and furnished with a seraglio. This establishment, so shameful in a Christian country, was in perfect accordance with the profligacy of the Russian Court.

On the 8th of August Sir John reached Petersburg. Among his most remarkable acquaintances in that capital was the Princess Daschkow, to whom he was introduced by Dr Robertson and Dr Blair.\* The Prin-

\* Dr Robertson's letter, enclosing the introduction, contains the following paragraph relative to foreign translations of his own works :—" I shall think myself much obliged to you, if you will be so good as to bring me a copy of the new French translation of the History of Scotland. The translation of Charles V. is a capital performance ; that of America has merit, but that of Scotland was a poor one indeed, so that I shall be glad to see one which will be better. I have read, in some foreign journal, that there is a Russian translation of Charles V. Will you be so good as to enquire, and buy a copy for me. So much for the vanity of an author ! I am sorry the publication of your book is deferred."—*College of Edinburgh*, May 24, 1786.



cess had resided in Scotland, where she placed her son under the tuition of the historian. Being a woman of great ability and superior education, she exercised the rather strange office of her Imperial Majesty's Minister for Literary Affairs, being at the head of the Petersburg Academy. For this situation the Princess, in the opinion of Sir John, was better qualified than any of the male nobility. The dress of this female academician was singular. It consisted of a kind of great coat thrown over her gown; indicating, as it would seem, the predominance of masculine over softer qualities in her character. She spoke with much enthusiasm of Scotland and its inhabitants; and paid this compliment to the women of Britain, "that a well educated, unfrenchified English lady was the noblest and most perfect of God's creatures." She mentioned, that once during the two hot months in Italy, when it was impossible to go out with pleasure, she shut herself up, and lived by candle light the whole time, reading with her young family. "The Italians," said she, "thought me mad, but I never spent two months more usefully or more agreeably." Although the favourite of a despotic sovereign, this extraordinary woman was extremely liberal in her politics. "She is much inclined to republicanism and liberty," says Dr Blair, "and when here" (at Edinburgh), "was always more connected with Opposition than with Government."\*

\* Letter, dated 22d May, 1786.

At St Petersburg, Sir John had the gratification of meeting with several of his countrymen, holding high rank in the Russian service. He mentions the Count de Balmain, who commanded the corps of Noble Cadets, a favourite institution of the Empress. The Count was considered as heir-male to the Ramsays of Balmain in Kincardineshire. During an excursion to Cronstadt our traveller received much civility from the famous Admiral Greig, who showed him the fleet and fortifications, and whom he describes as "a plain, intelligent, and shrewd Scotsman." The admiral was highly esteemed by Catherine, who, some time afterwards, on hearing of his death, exclaimed, "Where shall I find another Greig?" He had asked nothing while he lived, but her Majesty, on his decease, did not forget his children. "They are," said the Empress, "a sacred deposit in my hands."

On the 20th, the Baronet went to Court to be presented. About twelve, the Empress came from her private apartments to go to mass. The company formed a double line through which she passed. Her retinue, consisting of about twenty courtiers, preceded her; and she was followed by six or seven ladies, including the Princess Daschkow. My father was admitted to the chapel, and saw the Empress perform her devotions with more decorum than he expected. Returning to the hall, he was presented to Prince Potemkin, her chief favourite, a tall, manly figure. The Prince entered into conversation, expressing

much contempt for the King of Sweden, and asking Sir John's advice as to the best mode of cultivating his estates in the Ukraine. On the return of the Empress from her devotions, Sir John was introduced to her Majesty by Count Osterman. She enquired by what route he had come to Petersburgh, and whether he had a pleasant voyage; and expressed her hope that he would find his stay in Russia agreeable. This reception was considered very gracious, as she seldom addressed any but persons of great distinction; and he was afterwards pointed out as "the gentleman to whom the Empress had spoken."

My father was less impressed by the magnificence than by the servility of the courtiers. He considered the Empress not less remarkable for her great abilities, than for great vices. Her skill in the art of government was evident from the instructions written with her own hand for drawing up a code of laws. She was well acquainted with French literature; and was even reading Shakspeare in a German translation. In her conduct to the church, to the army, and to the peasantry, she manifested the extent and depth of her policy. She embroidered vestments for the priesthood, feasted with the officers of the different regiments in her service, and allowed the meanest peasant to address her by the title of Matouskin, or Mother. Sir John was surprised to find that, under a despotic government like that of Russia, no prefer-

ence should be given to primogeniture. The estate of the deceased, with the exception of certain portions for the widow and the daughters, was divided equally among the sons—a rule not to be departed from but by permission from the Court. During Sir John's stay at Petersburg, a French fleet was at Cronstadt, to the arrival of which the Empress one day alluded at dinner. Her courtiers took the opportunity of praising the French officers, but their eulogiums were soon silenced by her sarcastic remark, that “probably there was not one of them who had not been in an English prison.” Some years before, when Colonel Rhall asked leave to serve as a volunteer in the American service, he got for answer, that “the Empress did not incline to take any part in the intestine divisions of England.”

My father was much alarmed at the facility with which English improvements of all kinds, and particularly in naval architecture, were obtained by foreign countries, and in particular by the Russians, proverbially the most imitative of all nations. One Hyneman, ten years before, had brought over the English machinery for making blocks; and the French Admiral at Cronstadt, Glissoniere, learnt it at that time from the Russians. One Coleman was engaged to build a hundred gun-ship for the service of Catherine, but his orders were to be always a week in advance of the native shipwright, who thus was enabled,

in his own performances, to profit by the example of the English workman. Sir John's remark, in his private journal, is, "Thus, poor England is treated."

On the 31st, my father went to Pauloski to be introduced to the son of the Empress, the Grand Duke, afterwards Paul I. He was cordially received, and invited to stay dinner; when he was placed opposite the Grand Duke and Duchess, that they might converse with him more freely. The Grand Duke mentioned that he greatly preferred the Scotch breed of horses; and after dinner, in order to show the kind of animal he alluded to, mounted his favourite charger in the court-yard, and with much satisfaction put it through the paces which it had learned under Angelo, a celebrated riding-master at Edinburgh. He expressed a great wish to have an animal of the same sort sent to him from England. Sir John conceived that such an animal would be an acceptable and well-chosen present from the British Government. He endeavoured to prevail on Lord Grenville and Lord Hawkesbury to conciliate the future Emperor by a gift which probably no French Minister would have hesitated to bestow. On their refusal he thought of sending one himself, and I observe among his papers a letter on the subject to the Russian Minister. Whether the horse was actually sent I have no means of ascertaining. In the afternoon Sir John had the honour of attending their Highnesses over their grounds. Passing through a field of barley, the Grand

Duchess good-humouredly pulled one of the ears, saying, "Sir, take this ear and try if such grain will grow in your country." They pressed him to remain till next day, but previous engagements obliged him to take his departure. The Grand Duke, being at one time urged to demand possession of the imperial crown from his mother, who was evidently an usurper, made the memorable answer—memorable from his own terrible destiny,—“I will never furnish my son with an apology for conspiring to dethrone me.” My father received a letter six years afterwards from this Prince, expressing himself in terms of much regard.

On the 5th September, Sir John set out for Moscow. After passing hastily through Novogorod, the ancient capital of the empire, and admiring its eighty domes and spires, he reached his destination on the 10th. He was much pleased with the magnificence of this almost Asiatic city, and joined heartily in Count Osterman's remark, “what a town would this have been if all the money spent in Petersburg had been laid out here!” The Count did not foresee that in a few years a man would arise, who, carrying conquest before him to its gates, would make the Russians themselves lay the whole of it in ashes to save their country from subjugation.

Visiting the archives, Sir John was amused with the anxiety of the keeper to prove that the Czar had been long acknowledged by foreign powers to be of imperial rank. The loyal Muscovite produced with

much reluctance a few documents from England, which simply designated the autocrat as king, but exhibited triumphantly a letter from the Court of Germany, sealed with the imperial arms in gold, giving the Czar the title of Emperor.

Dining with Count Orloff, the Scottish stranger was shown a remarkable species of pigeons, valued in Russia as much as falcons formerly were in England. They are taught to ascend out of sight, and to return again in circles with such precision as to alight on the finger from which they took their flight. The Orloff family were supposed to have expended L.20,000 on this amusement. A merchant having a dwelling-house and a pigeon-house to dispose of, demanded 20,000 rubles for the two. "Including the pigeons," said a nobleman, who knew the value of the breed, "I will give you 14,000 rubles (L.2330) for your property, but without them not 2000 rubles" (L.330)—thus valuing the pigeons at L.2000 sterling.

On the 21st we find our tourist at the hospitable mansion of Count Romanzoff in the Ukraine. The Count was brought up, under Marshal Keith, in the Prussian service, and afterwards rose to be himself a Marshal in the service of Russia. He acquired the epithet of Sadounaisky, signifying the conqueror beyond the Danube. At dinner a Russian General and several officers were present; but such is the subserviency of Russians to their superiors, that not one of

them spoke a single word even to each other. The Marshal said that one profession was as much as any man could know thoroughly, and that therefore he paid little attention to any subject not connected with military affairs. "Nothing is so imprudent," he observed, "as to despise your enemy, or to rouse his passions, whether of revenge, pride, or indignation; since the hostile energy thus excited may compensate for want of skill and courage." He deprecated generals being too often seen by their own troops, as tending to make them less respected. Though he admitted no inferior to familiar intercourse, he was courteous to the meanest of the soldiers; and constantly took off his hat when even the children of the peasantry bowed to him. He ascribed his victories over the Turks to his constant preparation against assault; "for," said he, "if the Turks once break in, there is no resisting their impetuosity." The Count entered heartily into the views of the Empress as to the annexation of Turkey to her dominions. On this subject he found no lack of sympathy in his English visitor, who looked upon it as a disgrace to Christendom that a horde of infidel barbarians, rendered incapable of improvement by their political and religious prejudices, should be suffered to remain encamped in the richest plains of Europe.

On leaving Russia, Sir John remarked, that it is in the happiest of all political situations. "Its dominions," says he, "are so situated, that it cannot be



attacked to advantage, and consequently is safe at home. It has the choice of allies, and can play the game of Denmark against Sweden, the Emperor against Prussia, France against England, or *vice versa*, as it finds most for its own interest. It has gained by its alliances with every power it has been connected with, but has hardly, in any instance, made a return."

My father entered Poland on the 26th of September. After getting on slowly over bad roads, with eight post horses, through a country which he describes as in a miserably desert state, though susceptible of high improvement, he reached Warsaw on the 4th October. His visit derives a melancholy interest from the crisis on which the country was then verging; the last King of Poland was then in his capital; one of the last diets was sitting; the kingdom had already been dismembered by one partition; and as soon as three rapacious powers could settle their respective shares of the spoil, was destined to lose its national existence by another.

On the 6th, the baronet, in company with the Archbishop of Carthage, the Pope's nuncio, went to visit the royal apartments. While they stood admiring the paintings by Bacciarelli, the ill-fated King entered. He was in the 54th year of his age, tall, rather handsome, and very elegant in his manners; in his features he resembled the Marlborough family. With moderate pretensions to the character of a statesman, he was certainly an amiable and accomplished

gentleman. Addressing Sir John Sinclair, he observed that the name of Sinclair was well known to him. He spoke of the Sinclairs of Sweden, and of a Major Sinclair, whose assassination by the Russians had nearly been made a pretence for a war.\*

On the 8th, Sir John was regularly presented at court. The King spoke to him in English, and, among other obliging expressions, regretted that his stay was likely to be so short; adding, "I would not have parted with you so soon, had I not believed you are a good Englishman; that you can be of service to your country at home, and that it might suffer by your absence."

In the evening, my father returned, by invitation, to the palace, and held a long political conversation with the King. Mr Pitt was a great favourite of Stanislaus. His Majesty was much pleased with a character of that Minister which Sir John had drawn up, and read it to his sister, commenting occasionally on different passages. At the conclusion of some remarks on England, he declared his ardent wish to assimilate the Polish constitution as much as possible to the British.

Sir John exchanged frequent visits with Mr Whitworth (afterwards Lord Whitworth), the English Minister, as also with Count Stackleberg, ambassador from Russia. Mr Whitworth at first said of Stackle-

\* This fact is mentioned in the State Papers published at the time.

berg, that he governed Poland with decency and moderation ; but soon found reason to alter his opinion. The Muscovite stranger maintained as much dignity as the lawful sovereign, and exacted great servility from the natives.

My father thought the oligarchy of Poland a worse government than the despotism of Russia ; more insecure both against internal convulsions and foreign aggression ; more vexatious to the nobility, and more oppressive to the people. All the good intentions of the King were frustrated by the spirit of faction : “ I have enjoyed,” he said, “ but few happy moments during my reign.” While the Sovereign was without power, and the people without freedom, the nobility, a dissipated and effeminate race, were alternately tyrants or slaves to one another. The privilege of the *liberum veto*, giving to an individual noble the power of interdicting the proceedings of the legislature, was fatal to good government. The aristocracy were impoverished by useless and ostentatious expense. “ The word *grand*,” says our observant traveller, “ has done much to make Poland little. There are so many grand marshals, and grand et ceteras, that nothing is thought of but the paltry arts of acquiring these high-sounding titles. To this absurd and ruinous vanity may be ascribed their general inattention to the public interest. Poland,” he adds, “ is at this hour within the grasp of Russia.”

When Sir John attended the diet, he observed

that each of the four grand constables had a long and powerful baton. When the diet assembled in a hall, if any disorder arose, they used to beat the floor so violently with their batons, that not a word could be heard, and thus enforced silence. But when the diet assembled in the fields, two of the grand constables with their batons knocked down any refractory member. Our traveller procured a baton which had been used in 1786, and sent it to Mr Speaker Addington, to show how different were the means employed for maintaining order in the Polish from the British legislature.

Dining with the Prince Primate, the Archbishop of Gneznow, Sir John obtained some curious information about Prince Stanislaus, the King's nephew. From a state of extreme poverty, this young Prince extricated himself by a bold speculation. He found means to borrow about L.250,000 in Holland, on his uncle's security, at about four per cent. With this sum, he purchased estates in the Ukraine and other provinces, producing nine or ten per cent. In ten years, he hoped not only to pay the money borrowed, but to realize about L.50,000 a-year. He would thus be amongst the richest men in Poland. He usually dressed in an English uniform, being afraid, as a candidate for the Crown, to irritate Russia by affecting popularity in his own country.

Among other persons with whom the baronet be-

came acquainted at Warsaw, was M. Tepper, a banker, who gave a splendid fête, and invited the greater part of the corps diplomatique to meet the English stranger. My father was somewhat shocked at the fastidiousness and ill-breeding betrayed by the noble guests, who, while partaking heartily of the banquet, made no secret of their contempt for the hospitable parvenu, their entertainer, laughing at "little Tepper," almost to his face. From his name, Tepper, and from the circumstance that none of his family spoke English, Sir John could hardly have supposed himself in a Scotch house, and was astonished, therefore, to find in the diningroom portraits which, upon enquiry, turned out to be those of Lord Pitfour, Captain Ferguson, governor of Greenwich Hospital, and others. Tepper's name was properly Ferguson, and he was very proud of his Scotch pedigree. His fortune was immense, and being the richest man in Warsaw, he could well bear with the jocularities of the proud grandees, his needy guests. He had by far the best of the joke, and might have returned the sneers of envy with the self-complacent sentiment in Horace,

*Populus me sibilat—at mihi plaudo*

*Iipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arcâ.*

He stood alone—or almost a solitary example of prosperity amidst the general poverty, having accumulated a fortune of L.430,000. On one occasion a bill was drawn upon him from Russia for L.80,000,

which he answered at sight. So low was credit in Poland that the legal interest of money was eight per cent, which Tepper would allow for any sum placed in his hands. Some time afterwards, on my father's return to England, Mr Pitt, at the close of some political conversation, asked him where he had fared best during his travels : The Baronet, having Tepper's dinner fresh in remembrance, said, " In Poland." " I have often heard," replied the Minister, " of the *Polish Diet*."

The Poles, notwithstanding all their miseries, were proud of their Constitution. They considered an elective monarchy superior to all other forms of government. Even my father's Polish valet harangued him one day on the kind of aristocratic dignity with which this eligibility to a throne invested the whole Polish nation. " Sir," said the man, " I myself might be King of Poland." The Latin language, formerly so prevalent in the country, had fallen into disuse. Our traveller, however, was addressed fluently in Latin by his landlord at an inn, and heard his postilion complaining of a long stage in the classical phraseology ; " *Via est magna, etiam maxima*."

Sir John left Warsaw on the 10th October, and proceeding through Cracow and Olmutz, reached Vienna on the 17th. He was presented on the 22d to the Emperor Joseph, by Sir Robert Murray Keith, whom he considered as the ablest of all our Ministers on the Continent. He describes Joseph II. as

a plain man, brought up in the school of adversity, punctual in business, but engrossed by the details of a petty economy, quite unworthy of a great or comprehensive mind. He was severe in his administration; but, like the Empress Catherine, sought popularity by receiving petitions even from his meanest subjects. Sir John, on one occasion, found his Imperial Majesty standing in a passage, where a crowd of poor were presenting their petitions on their knees. The Emperor received our traveller and Sir R. M. Keith at a private audience in his cabinet, and put a number of questions respecting the tour. His Majesty's known dislike to Poland led the tourist to omit the intermediate part of his journey, and to answer in general terms that he had come from Russia. The Emperor afterwards alluded to the gratifying reception given to the Archduke and Duchess in England; but appeared to have been most struck with their account of *une chose unique*, which they had witnessed at Portsmouth, namely, four thousand pieces of cannon seen at one view. Observing the Emperor begin to rub his hands, the usual signal to withdraw, Sir John and Sir Robert took their leave.

The Emperor appeared to suspect that he was not regarded with much favour in England. Speaking one day to Colonel Gordon, an English officer, whom he had placed next to him at table, "Your King," he said, "does not like Germany, at least Upper Germany. Had I been well used by England she

might have depended on my friendship, and would never have lost America." \* Nothing, indeed, could have been more impolitic and disgraceful than the negligence of the English Government towards the Court of Vienna. Sir Robert Murray Keith assured my father that for weeks his despatches to Downing Street remained unanswered. "I wish," said he, "that they would only send me large packets of old newspapers, the receipt of which would give me some little consequence in the eyes of the Austrian Government." The Emperor was much annoyed by a foolish speech of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall in our House of Commons. He considered it beneath the Imperial dignity to speak publicly upon the subject himself; but persons in his confidence expressed on his part their indignation at the idea that the "Emperor's sword, like a lawyer's tongue, was to be had for hire."

On the 23d Sir John was presented to the Archduke and Archduchess. An immense crowd had assembled to congratulate them on their safe arrival from England. The British Minister introduced all the English together, when her Imperial Highness took occasion to express the pleasure she had derived from her recent journey to England. The day was fine, and the sun was shining at the time: upon which

\* An intelligent German historian, Baron Varnhagen von Ense, in the Berlin Critical Review, June 1831, coincides with the opinion here advanced by the Emperor.



she remarked, that in England, while she was there, the sun always shone ; with a number of other compliments, showing that both the Archduke and herself were much pleased with their visit. In such terms had they described their reception to the Emperor, that, notwithstanding his antipathy to England, he expressed a wish to have been of their party.

At Vienna the Baronet formed an acquaintance with Prince Kaunitz, the Austrian Prime Minister, with Dr Ingenhouz, and Baron Born, both distinguished naturalists, with Count Zinzendorff, Comptroller-General of Finance, the Abbé Denis, and other eminent political and literary men. Of Prince Kaunitz my father had a very low opinion, and ascribed to the egotism and vanity of that Minister, as well as to our own negligence, the rupture of the ancient alliance between Austria and Great Britain, so essential to the interests of both countries.

One evening, on a visit to Dr Ingenhouz, Sir John was shown a number of letters which that celebrated philosopher had received from Dr Franklin. From certain political hints in these documents, the inference was plain, that it was from pique and resentment that the American patriot put forth all his energies to disunite America from England. Our traveller was delighted to meet the Abbé Denis, a celebrated poet, by whom an excellent translation had been made of Ossian, into German, and promised

the translator a copy of that work, as soon as it was printed in the original Gaelic. Among the most useful men of talents at that time, was Baron Born, whose scientific exertions had raised the mineral productions of his country from about 16,000,000 florins, to L.1,700,000 a-year. This philosopher was suffering acute pain during his interview with my father, and exclaimed, in a paroxysm of his distemper, "*Si j'étais un Anglais, je me tuerois.*"

Sir John was anxious to obtain information from Count Zinzendorff, an intelligent and laborious man, respecting financial matters ; but the Count had received express orders to keep every thing in his department as secret as possible. At the Austrian capital the Baronet saw three military personages, connected by parentage with his own country, Marshals Laudohn and Lacy, and General Browne. The two latter were of Irish extraction, and the former of Scotch ; but all three (as is usual with denaturalized citizens) were united in hostility to the land of their forefathers.

On the 1st of November our traveller left Vienna, and proceeded through Prague and Dresden to Berlin. On the 12th he was presented at Court by Mr Ewart, of the English Embassy, to Frederick William II., who, a few months before, had succeeded to the carefully-hoarded treasures and powerful armies of the great military prodigy, his predecessor. There were two rooms covered entirely with black cloth. In

one the King gave the parole of the day, and issued orders to the garrison ; in the other, all Foreign Ministers and strangers were introduced to him. His Majesty spoke with great affability to every one, and enquired of the Baronet the particulars of his journey.

At the Prussian capital my father associated with many interesting persons ; such were Count Hertzberg ; the Prince de Sacken ; Baron de Reede, the Dutch Envoy ; Count Fink de Finkenstein, the Prime Minister ; Prince Henry of Prussia, and Count Mirabeau. The Baron de Reede gave a dinner, during which he made a curious remark with regard to the republicans in Holland. “ The party,” said he, “ has three leaders—the Pensionaries of Amsterdam, Haerlem, and Dort. None of them have any family to provide for ; they are therefore careless what risk they run, especially as they may carry their whole fortune in their pockets.” After supper, at the house of Count Finkenstein, Sir John was surprised to find himself engaged at “ blind-man’s-buff.” The apology of his host for this juvenile game, in which all the seniors of the company joined, was a desire to gratify the young princes. The amusements, indeed, of Berlin, could afford but little satisfaction to an intelligent tourist. Assemblies were held weekly at the houses of the several Ministers of State, in rotation. They were called *conversazioni* ; but there was literally no conversation. Almost all the company sat down to cards till supper was announced. At

one of these silent meetings, my father counted, out of eighty-seven persons present, only five, including himself, who were not seated at the card-table. A dinner-party at this unsocial city was a great event, being not only of rare occurrence, but of long duration. The invitation, certainly, was given uncere- moniously, and by a verbal message ; but no mistake could happen through the carelessness of the messen- ger, as all the Berlin world knew perfectly where the dinner was, and who the guests. “ The dinners,” says the author of the “ Code of Health,” “ were mi- serably long and tedious, and the guests ate most vo- raciously. The old custom in Germany was to get up between the services, and to walk about in another room until the second service was put on table and ready to be devoured. The longest dinner I ever wit- nessed was at the house of the Prince de Sacken, where the company sat eating for nearly five hours !”

An agreeable relief to my father from the mono- tony of this gastronomic life was the society of the celebrated Mirabeau, who resided at the same hotel. He told Sir John, in confidence, that he was sent to Berlin by M. Calonne, to prevent Prussia from abandoning the French interest for that of England. When other methods failed, he had recourse to in- trigues, suited rather to the taste of our second Charles, than to that of Frederic William. My fa- ther had drawn up in French a character at some length of Mr Pitt, which he showed the Count, and

which the latter good-naturedly revised, so that the style became such as would abide the scrutiny of the most fastidious Parisian critic. Finance was among the favourite studies of Mirabeau. He proposed translating the "History of the Public Revenue" into French. Before my father's departure, he furnished him with introductions to three friends at Paris, whom he somewhat invidiously described as the only three individuals there worth knowing. These were the Marquis de la Fayette, M. Penchaud, the banker, and the Abbé Perigord, afterwards Prince Talleyrand.

Sir John took peculiar interest ever after in the sayings and doings of Mirabeau. The Count once told a common friend that France was much indebted to England for having taken the lead and shown the example of a revolution. "Among other lessons," said he, "which you have taught us, is that of *not taking off the King's head*. We shall avoid that blunder; it is the sure way to establish a military government." Mirabeau was well acquainted with English literature. He said that there was a Scotch metaphysician, from whose works he had derived more peace and satisfaction than from those of any other philosopher. This author proved afterwards to be the well-known Dr Reid. The sudden death of Mirabeau, at so critical a moment for the French republic, gave rise to suspicions of poison. Our Scottish Hippocrates, however, Dr Gregory, used to allege,

perhaps with as much truth as humour, that “ he died of the ignorance of his physician.”

At Berlin my father procured information respecting the manufacture of china, and transmitted a specimen to the far-famed Mr Wedgwood, whose name is popularly used to designate a certain kind of ware. Mr Wedgwood acknowledged the obligation by presenting Sir John with a complete desert-set, after the same pattern, with the information that he had never had so many orders for any article as for that suggested to him by the Berlin specimen.

Sir John intended to leave Berlin on the 20th, but was induced to remain by an invitation to sup with Prince Henry, which our Minister requested him to accept. This was the only instance in which the punctuality of our tourist was interrupted, and in which he did not set out on the very day he had intended ; but his complaisance was well rewarded, for the King was of the party, and conversed with him for some time. Calling him aside, his Majesty made a similar remark to that of the royal personages before mentioned, that the name of Sinclair was not unknown to him, and that he had often heard of the Sinclairs of Sweden. “ I understand,” continued he, “ that you have paid particular attention to the subjects of commerce and finance, subjects with which I myself am much occupied at present. Had you stayed longer here, I should have been glad of your sentiments and assistance in these matters.” Sir John

replied, that he could be of little service, but that any useful suggestions in his power would be at his Majesty's command. "With respect to commerce," said the King, "I think that the trade of my dominions is subject to impolitic restrictions. These it is my intention to remove ; and if you return some years hence to Prussia, you will find a material improvement." My father remarked on the advantageous position of Prussia for trade, and expressed his confidence that the contemplated alterations would be attended with the happiest results. "As regards finance," proceeded the King, "I flatter myself that many useful changes can be made, particularly in the excise. What would you say to an excise in England, under the management of Frenchmen ?"

My father observed, that it was with real satisfaction he beheld the commencement of his Majesty's reign, which he had little doubt would prove as glorious for the arts of peace as that of his predecessor had been for those of war. "By giving more liberty to trade," he added, "and by levying the public revenues in a manner less burdensome to the people, your Majesty, I am convinced, will greatly augment the resources of Prussia. I would urge, in particular, that a diminution of the transit duties will actually increase the revenue from the quantity of foreign goods, especially from Poland, which will find their way through the Prussian dominions. My journey has been very extensive, but I have spent most of my

time in Russia. I have the satisfaction of informing your Majesty, that all the better part of the Russian nation consider Prussia as the natural German ally of their country ; and I have little doubt of seeing, in time, a wise and proper system of political connexion organized in the North." The King, after mentioning that he entertained similar expectations, began to enquire into the state of Russia, principally in regard to its finances. Sir John answered, that in the course of his journey he had collected much information as to the state of that empire, which might be of service to Prussia ; that it was impossible for him to communicate the whole verbally and extemporaneously, but that, on his return to England, he would embrace an early opportunity of transmitting it by Count Lusi from London. His Majesty replied, "that nothing could be more agreeable to him ;" and was pleased to add, "when any plan occurs to you which you think may be useful to Prussia, I desire that you will always forward it to me personally through the channel of my Minister in England." He then politely concluded, by expressing his regret at the shortness of my father's stay at Berlin, wishing him a pleasant tour and safe return to England, and enjoining him again not to forget what he had mentioned with regard to Count Lusi.

After the King had retired, Sir John conversed with Prince Henry on questions, more particularly of commerce and finance. The Prince asked his opi-



nion as to a recent treaty of commerce between France and England; adding, "My own idea is, that your country will derive from it the greater share of benefit." He next said, "As you have so deeply studied the subject, let me ask, do you think it possible to contrive a perfect system of finance?" Sir John answered, "If a society or nation could be found of perfect men, all of them divested of avarice, and all zealous for the public interest, perhaps a perfect system, as regards that country and that particular period, might be devised. But the same system would not answer in a different country, producing articles of a different kind, and governed in a different manner. An independent revenue, for example, though suitable to despotism, is contrary to the principles of a free government; nor would the same system suit the same country in different stages of civilisation; for instance, at first all taxes would be paid in personal service, next in kind, and, finally in money." The Prince appeared much pleased with the answer. "I regret," says he, "having no farther opportunity of cultivating so valuable an acquaintance." The baronet was amused with the interest he excited among the courtiers, after being so much noticed by the royal family. "Such," says he, in his Journal, "is the consequence of a Sovereign's smiles. Alas! on what a sandy foundation are such attentions built."

In consequence of these conversations the traveller had shortly afterwards a letter from our Minister, Mr

Ewart, soliciting his good offices with Mr Pitt towards forming a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Prussia. Mr Ewart conceived him, from all he had seen and heard, peculiarly able to explain the good intentions of the Prussian Court towards England, and the best mode of carrying them into effect.

My father left Berlin on the 22d, and reached Hanover on the 25th of November. Next day he dined with the Duke of York, who, at that time, nominally governed the country ; though the reins of power were in the hands principally of Baron Blerois, the confidential Minister of George III. He describes the military art as the Duke's favourite object, and the command of an English army his chief ambition. He was getting so tired of Hanover that he intended to consider England thenceforward as his own country, and Germany an occasional séjour. He had not wasted his time abroad, but had acquired a great deal of military and some political knowledge. Prince Kaunitz, the Austrian Prime Minister, had behaved to the Duke with his usual haughtiness. Kaunitz had asked his Royal Highness to take the air with him on horseback, but after the ride was over, turned, and left him in the ménage, without uttering a word. The Duke said, he never would forget a speech made to him by Joseph, which betrayed the secret policy of that Emperor. " It is my interest to keep well with France, for I can then take all

my troops out of Flanders and Italy to attack Frederick.”

Sir John conceived that the advantages of our union with Hanover had never been effectually improved by Great Britain. The Electorate commanded the mouths of two great rivers, forming important channels for our commercial intercourse with the interior of Europe. The Elector, he conceived, might agree to charge no transit duty on the productions of Prussia and Saxony exported, provided no transit duty was charged on British goods imported through Hanover into those countries. Thus, British and East India produce might reach Leipsic, the great entrepôt of Germany.

Sir John entered Holland on the 30th November, and was introduced to the Prince and Princess of Orange. The Stadtholder he describes as of a weak and unprepossessing appearance, not deficient in abilities, but better fitted to give other men good advice than to act by it himself. He had been ill educated, taught to be suspicious of all mankind, and to look upon them as either fools or knaves ; the former of whom cannot give a sound opinion, while the latter will not, unless it suits their own interests. He was indolent in business, and neglected important matters for months together. He had no political nor perhaps personal courage ; and had let slip many favourable opportunities of allaying the disaffection which prevailed in the country. Still, however, he was a

favourite with many of his people, especially the Zealanders.

Of the Princess of Orange, sister to the reigning King of Prussia, my father entertained a very different opinion. He thought her one of the ablest women in Europe—not personally disliked even by the republican or patriotic party. Her domestic life was amiable and exemplary. She was at great pains in educating her children, who appeared to profit by her instructions.

Holland at that time was the theatre of the basest intrigues on the part of France. French agents swarmed throughout the provinces in such number and variety, that it was proverbially said, “Every Dutchman may have a French spy to follow him like a dog, and of his own choosing, young or old, tall or short, male or female, civil or military.” The French left no means untried to alienate the people from the Stadtholder and from England. With hearts narrowed by selfishness, they were perpetually declaiming on universal benevolence. They bribed the daily press, and thus commanded public opinion ; since the people, who associated little together, had no other means of information. They employed able libellers in prose and verse to asperse, with continual calumny, the House of Orange. They bought over the most influential persons with immense largesses, to the extent, it was alleged, of half a million ; using, for the purpose of this corruption, money borrowed from

the Dutch themselves, and never likely to be repaid. They laboured to excite the jealousy of the Hollanders against England, representing the latter country as their commercial enemy and rival ; and persuading many Dutchmen on patriotic principles to sell out of the English funds, in order to purchase in their own or in the French. They instituted a patriotic free corps for the purpose of promoting disloyalty ; and, above all, they endeavoured as much as possible to debauch the moral and religious principles of the people. In short, the house of the French ambassador was “ a temple of every species of corruption.” The object of these intrigues was to weaken England, to strengthen their interests in the East Indies, to augment their navy, and to make Holland their bank for raising loans.

This account of anti-Anglican and anti-Christian emissaries, which a modern reader might well take for a description of the French Directory in 1794, was written at the close of 1786, while Louis XVI. was yet in the zenith of his power. In the very next year, my father's forebodings as to the result of French artifice in Holland were realised. The Stadtholder's government was overthrown, and was only re-established by the armed intervention of Prussia.

From Holland our traveller proceeded to Flanders, where he again found the seeds of discontent and disloyalty. These seeds had been sown by the same agency, and were already springing up in consequence

of some needless and unpopular innovations. The Emperor Joseph had been endeavouring to negotiate an exchange of his Flemish provinces for Bavaria. He was then engaged in the insane process of dismantling his fortifications, under pretence of economy ; a measure which afterwards permitted the revolutionary armies of France to overrun the country without impediment.

Sir John returned through France to London on the 16th January, 1787, after an absence of more than seven months, in the course of which he had travelled about 7500 English miles ; and had established personal acquaintance and correspondence with the most distinguished literary and political characters on the continent. He accumulated also a stock of various knowledge, of which he afterwards largely availed himself in the prosecution of his unceasing plans for the benefit of the country.

Soon afterwards he had a private audience of George the Third, to communicate such particulars of his tour as he thought would interest his Majesty. The King asked many questions regarding the three northern powers—Denmark, Sweden, and Russia ; and very graciously accepted my father's offer to draw up for his use the result of his observations and enquiries. The King alluded to a revolution reported to have nearly taken place in Sweden. Sir John replied, that the reports were well founded, and that but for the interference of Count Ferson, a nobleman of

Scóftish extraction (his name being properly M'Pherson), by whose exertions the Diet was prevented from proceeding to extremities, another revolution would have been effected, and the aristocratic system restored. The reply of George III. was worthy of a British Sovereign. "The King of Sweden would have deserved his fate ; for the Sovereign of a limited monarchy, if he is an honest man, will never aim at despotic power." Speaking afterwards of America, his Majesty took occasion to declare, "I always considered the American war as a war for maintaining the rights, not of the crown, but of the Parliament. The Americans acknowledged the supremacy of the crown, but they denied the authority of Parliament. I much lament the separation of the two countries ; but having once acknowledged the independence of the colonies, I will never countenance any plan for disturbing their government, and bringing them back to their old allegiance." On the above royal expressions Sir John thus remarks :—"These sentiments, spontaneously uttered, expressed with warmth, and, as far as I could possibly judge, coming from the heart, sufficiently prove that strict honesty, inflexible integrity, and a regard for the free constitution he had sworn to maintain, were distinguished traits in the character of George III."

In compliance with the King's desire, Sir John drew up three quarto pamphlets entitled, "General Observations regarding the Present State of Den-

mark, Sweden, and Russia." These were printed, but not published ; as many of their details were not at that time proper for the public eye. He sent a copy of his remarks on Russia to Lord Chancellor Thurlow, and received from him the following reply :—

" The Chancellor presents his best respects to Sir John Sinclair, and returns him many thanks for the use of his observations on Russia, in which he has found much information and entertainment."

In another note, Lord Thurlow terms this tract a " very valuable composition, which, though a short and rapid account, was so well digested, and consisted of such particulars as to afford a most agreeable view of the subject."

The author of these tracts sent also copies of them to General Washington, by their common friend, Dr Enoch Edwards, with injunctions, after perusal by the General and Mr Jefferson, to destroy them. In his answer, the Doctor expresses the gratification which those distinguished persons had received from them, and states his regret at being obliged to refuse Mr Adams, who was at that time President, the same favour. "He" (President Adams) " also wished," says Dr Edwards, " to read the papers you committed to my care in confidence to show to General Washington and Mr Jefferson, and then to burn them. This I punctually performed, not above three weeks before



President Adams applied to me. I burnt them with great regret, and thought at the time that you ought not to have laid such an injunction upon me."

The following remarks on the above pamphlets are from the pen of Dr Blair : " They convey much curious matter, and much information on the state of these kingdoms, and do honour to that accurate and scrutinising observation with which you surveyed public affairs when you was abroad. Indeed, neither at home nor abroad, do you allow yourself to be unemployed, or inattentive to the interests of your country. Though I wish the public were in possession of part of your intelligence, yet, considering some of the anecdotes you relate, and the freedom with which you treat some distinguished persons in high office, I think you were much in the right not to allow these papers to go into public circulation." \*

\* Letter dated 5th December, 1792.

## CHAPTER IV.

Second Marriage—Macdonald Family—Bosvilliana—Habits of Life—  
Useful Suggestions—Differences with Mr Pitt—Warren Hastings—  
Neutral Party—African Association—Regency Question—Slave  
Trade—British Wool Society—Cheviot Sheep.

BEFORE resuming the series of events in my father's political history, I may here introduce, at one view, in order to avoid breaks in my narrative, some particulars of his private life.

Sir John Sinclair, soon after his return from the continent, married the Honourable Diana, only daughter of Alexander, first Lord Macdonald. The reputation of Miss Macdonald not only for personal beauty and accomplishments, but for those more valuable qualities which insure the happiness of domestic life, had reached him before he enjoyed an opportunity of forming her acquaintance. The marriage ceremony, which was performed by Dr Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, took place at St George's Hanover Square, on the 6th of March 1788. \*

\* The Bishop some time after wrote the following letter of congratulation :—

“ Bath, April 6, 1788.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ I have this moment the honour of your letter, and send you a thousand felicitations on your marriage, and beg you to

On their presentation afterwards at Court, his Majesty made the complimentary remark, "that although he had seen handsomer men and handsomer women than Sir John and Lady Sinclair, they were the handsomest pair who had ever been presented to him.

The family with which the Baronet became connected, was among the oldest and most distinguished in Scotland. There are two rival claimants for the chieftainship of the Macdonald clan; but the representative of Lady Sinclair's family has always been styled by Highlanders emphatically, *MacDhonuill na'n Eilean*, or Macdonald of the Isles. The hereditary possessions are situated in the Isles of Skye and Uist; and have been sufficiently described by Dr Johnson and his friend Boswell in their tour to the Hebrides. The second Lord, Lady Sinclair's eldest brother, whose extensive local improvements are so well known and appreciated in the land of his ancestors, was in Parliament during the times of Mr Pitt. and was a strenuous supporter of that minister.\* He

make with Mrs Watson's my best respects to your lady, who, I doubt not has, and will continue to have, as much reason to thank me for the knot I tied as you have. The waters here have done me neither good nor harm; and that, I think, is saying enough for them, and for all the medical tribe. Adieu, and believe me, your faithful and affectionate servant,

R. LLANDAFF."

\* Lord Macdonald was returned for a Cornish borough. The author of these Memoirs many years afterwards travelled with him through Devonshire and Cornwall. On our approach

died unmarried in 1824, and was succeeded by his brother, Godfrey, a general in the army. Lady Sinclair's other brothers were Archibald, who married Miss Campbell, sister-in-law to the Prince de Polignac, the unfortunate Prime Minister of Charles X.; James, Colonel in the guards, killed at Bergen-op-Zoom in 1815; and Dudley, still unmarried, and resident in London. My mother's uncle, Sir James Macdonald, is well known in the biography of literature as a surprising instance of early talent. He died young, and

to the river Tamer we observed a small town prettily situated on its banks. I stopped the postboy to inquire the name of the place, and was answered Saltash. "*Saltash*," exclaimed my uncle, putting down the glass; "I had no idea of Saltash being so near. I rejoice to see for the first time my old borough. You know I represented it in Parliament." Sir Walter Scott, with his incomparable talent and humour, once coined a letter which he fathered upon my uncle, respecting the much contested chieftainship alluded to above.—He used to say of Glengary, whom he rightly termed the most spirited of Highlanders, that he wrote to Lord Macdonald, requiring his Lordship to acknowledge him for his chief, and received the following answer:—

"My dear Glengary,

"As soon as you can prove yourself to be my chief, I shall be ready to acknowledge you: in the meantime, I am yours.

"MACDONALD."

Sir Walter used to add, that one day he amused himself by telling a young lady that Lord Macdonald's family, from which she was descended, were not chieftains of the clan, but should be styled simply "Macdonalds of Slate:" but that he was at once silenced by the impromptu; "Well, Sir Walter, say what you please, you will always find the *Slates* at the top of the house."

it is of him that David Hume writes in a letter to Adam Smith ; “ Were you and I together we should shed tears at present, for the death of Sir James Macdonald. We could not possibly have suffered a greater loss than that valuable young man.”\* Lady Sinclair’s other uncle by her father’s side was Sir Archibald Macdonald, for many years Chief Baron of the English Exchequer. By her mother’s side she had a third uncle, William Bosville, Esq. of Gunthwaite in Yorkshire, and an aunt, Julia, married to Viscount Dudley and Ward, and mother to Earl Dudley, Secretary for Foreign Affairs during the administration of Mr Canning.

As my granduncle, Bosville, was among the most original and eccentric characters of his day, and as the subject of this Memoir was a frequent visitor at his house, I may be excused for introducing a few *Bosvilliana* related by my father or his contemporaries. My granduncle’s exterior consisted of the single-breasted coat, powdered hair and queue, and other paraphernalia of a courtier in the reign of George II.; but within this courtly garb was enclosed one of the most ultra-liberal spirits of the time. He assembled every day at his house in Welbeck Street a party of congenial souls, never exceeding twelve in number, nor receiving the important summons to dinner a single moment after five o’clock. Such was the old gentleman’s punctuality, that the first stroke of the

\* Dugald Stewart’s Life of Adam Smith, vol. iii. p. 465.

clock was the signal for going down stairs ; and when Mr Friend, the astronomer royal, arriving half a minute after, met the company on the staircase, Bosville addressed him with, “ I trust, Mr Friend, you will not fail to bear in mind for the future, that we don’t reckon time here by the meridian of Greenwich, but by the meridian of Welbeck Street.” The servants entered into this whimsical accuracy of their master, and when a well-known guest, out of breath with haste, one day rang the door bell about four minutes after five, the footman, looking up from the area, informed him that his master was “ busy dining !” This repulse was in perfect keeping with his master’s favourite maxim ; “ Some say better late than never ; I say, better never than late.” A slate was kept in the hall, on which any intimate friend (and he had many), might inscribe his name as a guest for the day. Among the persons thus privileged, I may mention, besides family connexions, Sir Francis Burdett, Lord Hutchinson, Horne Tooke, Parson Este, Major James, Baron Dimsdale, Lord Oxford, and Mr Clifford the barrister of O.P. celebrity. A specimen of Mr Bosville’s humour may be given in his description of the last dinner he partook at the house of Lord Dudley, his brother-in-law. “ I always dine,” said he, “ punctually at five ; but when I reached Park Lane after six, I commonly was forced to wait half an hour before my sister returned from her morning drive. Not till half-past seven did a single soul arrive to dinner, and I have often heard eight strike

when we were going down stairs. Feeling ashamed to be the only performer, while the rest were little better than spectators, I generally rose with an appetite. The fact is, Lady Dudley and her friends always dine at three o'clock without knowing it. At that hour she takes a beef steak and a glass of Madeira, which she chooses to call a luncheon. Finding that Lord Dudley's habits and my own did not agree, I at last concluded a treaty offensive and defensive, by which each engaged not to trouble the other with invitations, nor be angry at not receiving them. Since that time we have always lived on brotherly terms."

Mr Bosville scarcely ever quitted the metropolis; he used to say that London was the best residence in winter, and that he knew no place like it in summer. One year when in Yorkshire, he made a point of not visiting his own estates, lest he should be involved in the cares and troubles of a landed proprietor. But though he seldom really travelled, he sometimes made imaginary journeys. He used to mention as a grave fact, that once he visited the Scilly Isles, and attended a ball at St Mary's, where he found a young lady giving herself great airs, because her education had received a "finish" at the "Land's End." Another of his stories was, that having been at Rome during the last illness of Clement XIV., he went daily to the Vatican to ascertain what chance he had of enjoying the spectacle of an installation. The bulletins, according to my grand-uncle's playful imagination,

were variously expressed, but each more alarming than its predecessor. First, "his Holiness is very ill;" next, "his Excellency is worse;" then, "his Eminence is in a very low state;" and at last, the day before the Pope expired, came forth the startling announcement, "his Infallibility is delirious." This pleasant original occasionally coined anecdotes at the expense of his own guests, and related them to their face, for the amusement of the company. Parson Este was once editor of a paper called the World; and Bosville alleged of him before a large party, that one day a gentleman in deep mourning came to him at the office, requesting the insertion of a ready made panegyric on his brother, who had died a few days before. "No!" answered the reverend editor, "your brother did not choose to die in our newspaper, and that being the case, I can find no room for eulogies upon him." It was a favourite saying of Bosville, which my father borrowed from him, when he wanted to give encouragement to a diffident friend, "*Il faut risquer quelque chose.*" The origin of this catch-word was a story told by Bosville of a party of French officers, each of whom outvied the rest in relating of himself some wonderful exploit. A young Englishman who was present, sat with characteristic modesty in silence. His next neighbour asked him why he did not contribute a story in his turn, and being answered, "I have done nothing like the feats that have been told us," patted him on the back, and said, with



a significant look, "*Eh bien, Monsieur, il faut risquer quelque chose.*" Some one asked Mr Bosville whether he intended purchasing "the new Baronetage?" "No," replied the humourist, "I am waiting till the *Squirage* comes out;" a work then mentioned in derision, but now printed with success.

Among Mr Bosville's liberal friends, was the noted author of "the Political Register." While Cobbett was in Newgate, my grand-uncle went in state, with four horses to his carriage, to visit the prisoner; and afterwards presented him with a thousand pounds in token of sympathy, as he termed it, with the persecuted sufferer. The party in Welbeck Street, as may be supposed, never stood very high in favour of the government. The butler one day whispered to Mr Bosville, after dinner, that some gentlemen insisted upon seeing him in the anti-chamber. Going out to them, he found his friend Townshend the police-officer, and his myrmidons, in quest of two noted democrats then actually seated at the dinner-table. Bosville received "the gentlemen" with great civility, and offered them refreshments if they would not interrupt the socialities of the dining-room, pledging himself to be security for the objects of their search. These functionaries appear to have been almost as accommodating as the bailiffs who so obligingly augmented the retinue of Sir Richard Steele, at his memorable entertainment. Having made this arrangement, Bosville returned to table without the slightest symptom of discomposure,

and prolonged the entertainment till the usual hour. While the company were withdrawing, the bailiffs were allowed to execute their office, and carried off the astonished guests to prison.

The concluding days of Bosville are a melancholy evidence of the force of habit. He wished his dinner-parties to be continued to the very last. His health declined, and his convivial powers deserted him ; but the slate hung as usual in the hall, and he felt more anxiety than ever that the list of guests upon it should not fail of its appointed number. Habitually inclined to scepticism, he was not prepared, amidst increasing infirmities, to seek for comfort in religion. Even during his last hours, when he was confined to his chamber, the hospitable board was regularly spread below. He insisted upon reports from time to time of the jocularities calling forth the laughter which still assailed his ear ; and on the very morning of his death gave orders for an entertainment punctually at the usual hour, which he did not live to see. It would be well for those who think that religious consolations are easily attainable on a death-bed, and without habitual preparation, to take solemn warning from the last moments of Bosville !

Sir John and Lady Sinclair, after a short residence in London, settled in Edinburgh. Their house was for some time in the Canongate, which had not then been deserted by the Scottish gentry. Their establishment was in some degree patriarchal, as Lady

Janet (Sir John's mother), as well as his sister, who afterwards married Lord Polkemmet, a Senator of the College of Justice, his two daughters, and his niece Miss Campbell, resided under the same roof. In his choice of Edinburgh for the permanent abode of his family, the baronet was determined by partiality for his native country, and for the system of tuition pursued in the Scottish metropolis ; combining the advantages of a public and private education. After the death of Lady Janet, who was attached to her old house in the Canongate, he removed to Charlotte Square in the New Town. From the time when this addition to the city was begun, my father anticipated its future extent. In this respect he differed from the historian Hume, who, some years before, while he resided at the corner of St Andrew's Square, thought that Edinburgh had reached its maximum, and used to tell his friends, " Mark my words, not one of you will live to see this square finished." \*

\* The facetious Lord Bannatyne assured me, that one of the streets leading out of St Andrew's Square was, by a strange misnomer, called St David Street, in compliment to the Historian. During the discussion of the subject by the civic authorities, the simple name of David Street was considered vulgar, and the prefix of Saint was added to give it consequence. When the resolution was adopted, one of the bailies, happening to meet Hume, asked him to guess what honour had been conferred upon him. Hume confessed his inability to conjecture. " You will be surprised," continued the bailie, " to hear that we have made a ' saunt ' (saint) of you !"—" That," answered

The chief disadvantage of a home in Edinburgh was the frequent separation between my father and his family. Almost every year he visited Caithness, and went once or twice to London. These frequent and long journeys might seem almost incompatible with the numerous and elaborate literary undertakings in which he was perpetually engaged. But he carried all the necessary books and documents along with him, that he might regularly pursue his occupations at every stage. Scarcely had he arrived in London, Edinburgh, or Thurso, when his library-table was covered with papers and letters to such an extent as might lead a visitor to infer that he had been closely engaged in literary labours for a month at least. He rose at seven in the morning during summer, and at eight in winter, usually dictating to his clerk for an hour or two before breakfast. No sooner was the breakfast ended than he resumed his labours, and continued them, if possible, till two or three o'clock, when his studies were followed by exercise. His usual walk, when resident in Edinburgh, was to Leith ; and it was among his favourite sayings, that, whoever touched the post at the extremity of the pier, took an enfeoffment of life for seven years. After dinner he

David, " *is the very last honour I ever expected to receive !*" Hume did not always admit his principles to be so bad as they were suspected to be. A letter was one day brought to him, addressed " To Hume the Atheist." " Take that letter to Lord Kames," was his answer to the bearer. Henry Home, Lord Kames, was author of the " *Sketches of Man.*"

resumed his occupations, and, with the exception of a short interval for tea, continued them till ten o'clock.

His numerous journies and extensive correspondence brought him into communication with vast numbers of all classes and professions. The Abbé Gregoire, therefore, had some reason for affirming that "the Chevalier Sinclair was not only the most indefatigable man in Europe, but the man of the most extensive acquaintance." In his journeys between London and Caithness, my father seldom went directly along the great North road, but often diverged to the right or left, that he might visit the most eminent agriculturists, whether tenants or proprietors. He thus made himself acquainted with the most approved systems of husbandry, and could consult the ablest practical farmers on any question respecting which he wished for information.\*

During these journies the patriotic baronet availed

\* The following characteristic passage occurs in a letter from my father, dated Edinburgh, to George Dempster, Esq., so long member for Forfar:—"I arrived here the other day, after attending the sheep-shearing festivals at Woburn and Holkham. I afterwards went to see the farms of Mr Bailey of Chillingham, and Mr George Cully, at Eastfield, Northumberland; thence to Mr Robertson's of Ladykirk, and then to Mr George Rennie, at Phantassie, in East-Lothian, with a view of comparing the English and Scotch systems of husbandry. I have no doubt of the superiority of the latter. I proceed north in the course of a few days; and if I return by the coast road, shall not neglect paying you my almost annual visit at Dunnichen."

Dated 8th July, 1812.

himself of many opportunities to impart as well as receive useful suggestions. Valuable results occasionally followed from his happy talent of improving the most casual occurrences. One day, strolling among the romantic scenery near Kenmore in Perthshire, he entered into conversation with a respectable man named Macnaughton, of whom he asked some questions relative to sheep-farming in the neighbourhood. In particular, he enquired how the wool of the district was disposed of. The conversation that followed, and its consequences, are thus given by a gentleman who, some years after, visited Kenmore. "While seated in Mr Macnaughton's house, my attention was attracted by the sound of machinery ; a circumstance rather unusual in the Highlands. Upon enquiring what it was, Mr Macnaughton said, ' It is the noise of my spinning-mill.' I expressed my surprise to find a mill in so remote a district. ' Well,' said he, ' you will, I dare say, be no less surprised when I tell you how it came to be set a-going here. Some years ago I accidentally met with a gentleman travelling in this quarter, who, after several questions, said to me, ' Do you not think a spinning-mill would find employment in so populous a district ?' I said that I did not know, but at any rate there was no one in the place likely to undertake it. He enquired, ' Would you have any great objections to make a trial of it yourself ?' I replied that my circumstances would not afford running so great a risk ; for, in the event of not succeed-

ing, it would ruin me. 'Well,' said he, 'but would you make a trial, if assistance were given you?' After a little hesitation, I answered that I would have no great objection, provided another took the risk also. At this the gentleman seemed quite satisfied, and desired me to make immediate preparation for having the mill set agoing, assuring me that he would take the responsibility upon himself. So I set about the matter, got the mill you now hear set up, and now I have two additional ones in the district at no great distance, and all in regular employment; and,' continued he, perceiving my astonishment, 'you will be yet more surprised still when I tell you that the gentleman had no personal interest whatever in this part of the country. He was an entire stranger here.' 'And what is the gentleman's name,' I asked, 'for I know of one, and but one to whom this extraordinary circumstance would apply.' 'Why,' said Mr M'N., 'he is a proprietor in Caithness, and told me his name was Sir John Sinclair.' 'Well,' I observed, 'that is the very individual I had in view, and this I know is but one of many such endeavours of his to improve the country; but,' said I, 'have you ever shared the profits with Sir John?' 'As to that,' said he, 'it was no part of the bargain!'

Another incident somewhat similar occurred in a still more remote district. Sir John was crossing the little ferry in Sutherland, when the weather was so exceedingly rough that the boat was in great danger

of being swamped. He immediately began to consider how this narrow but dangerous passage might be avoided. It occurred to him that a mound might be thrown across, with a flood-gate so contrived as to open at low water for the egress of the rivers, and shut out the return of the tide. By this means he calculated that not only the inconvenience of the ferry would be removed, but many acres of valuable soil be gained from the sea. The plan was afterwards successfully adopted, among other munificent improvements executed by the Sutherland family; and a mole, at least a mile in length, now unites the two shores.

From the notices above given of Sir John Sinclair's travels in the north of Europe, and of his domestic life after his second marriage, I now resume my account of his political history. He continued for some time a supporter generally of the Administration. He felt a strong personal regard for the young Premier, and considered him an able and patriotic statesman; but would not permit his zeal as a partisan to blind his judgment, or to compromise his independence. Some important measures adopted by the Minister were so decidedly opposed by my father as to produce gradually an estrangement between the friends. Sir John, as we have already seen, much disliked the Westminster scrutiny: he also anticipated great difficulties in Mr Pitt's plan for a commercial union with Ireland: he disapproved of some points in the East



India bill; he regarded some of the taxes for defraying the interest of the funded debt as ill advised and impolitic. So far back as February 1785, he wrote a letter to the Premier, expressing, in strong terms of friendship, his anxious wish that he would reconsider some of the measures just mentioned. In this communication, of which the first draft is all that now remains, he represents to Mr Pitt that the Westminster scrutiny made the government unpopular, and was more and more regarded as an act of harshness and personality towards a rival; besides, that many of their common friends had, in the last division, voted with the Opposition, and might gradually be drawn over to that side of the House. He suggests a mode by which, as he conceived, the scrutiny might be honourably abandoned; adding, that he was the more alarmed on this subject from the probable difficulty of carrying the East India bill and the Irish propositions. After stating some strong objections to the latter measure, he concludes, "What I most *earnestly implore* is, that you would mention, in the opening of the business, that if the plan proposed occasions any alarm, apprehension, or jealousy in this country, it is your intention to bring in a bill, not for carrying the propositions into effect, but for appointing commissioners to meet with commissioners on the part of Ireland, for settling so important an arrangement."

To these grounds of difference another was now added in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Sir

John conceived that the Minister, in consenting to that measure, sacrificed, to his own ease and comfort, and to the security of his administration, a meritorious public servant, who, while we were losing by imbecility and mismanagement our western colonies, had by his energy and prudence preserved our empire in the East. The Minister, he thought, showed neither firmness nor public spirit in this endeavour to divert attacks from himself, by encouraging a powerful and exasperated Opposition to exhaust their strength and talents upon the late Governor-General of India. It will be in the remembrance of the reader, that, on the first charge, Mr Pitt defended Hastings; but that, on the second, namely, the treatment of Cheyt Sing, Zemindar of Benares, he surprised both the country and the House by voting against him. This surprise was greater, because the Minister readily admitted that, by the feudal code of India, the Governor was entitled to require aid both in men and money from the Zemindar; and that on account of his refusal he deserved a fine, although the fine imposed by Hastings was exorbitant. Mr Pitt's vote was considered still more surprising, because neither he himself, nor any accuser of Hastings, ever gave the slightest hint of public restitution to the Zemindar; although the money said to have been extorted was not applied to the private use of the accused, but to the public service. My father did not contemplate the proceedings against Hastings as a party measure,

more particularly as it had originated with the Opposition ; but regarded it as a purely judicial enquiry. He was indignant, therefore, that the Minister should take offence at this act of independence. He would not yield to the ministerial frown ; but, on the contrary, wrote a long letter of sympathy to Mr Hastings, expressing a high sense of his public services, and suggesting means which he hoped would put an end to an “ unjust and cruel persecution.” He then continues : “ But, after all, there are many difficulties to struggle with. I am much less afraid, however, of your open enemies than of hollow friends. I suspect that Pitt and Dundas are particularly hostile. They have never forgiven me for voting against the impeachment ; and are now so inveterate as to be actually carrying on an opposition against me in my own county, with every exertion of influence that Government can muster.” He concludes by expressing his hope, that Mr Hastings would soon attain the rank and consequence to which his public services entitled him. Allusion is here probably made to those marks of royal favour which the King is understood to have intended for the Governor-General.

It would be out of place for me to discuss further the trial of Mr Hastings. I may, however, mention that my father continued ever afterwards upon terms of cordial friendship with the individual for whose sake, conceiving him to be the victim of injustice and oppression, he had sacrificed in some degree the

friendship of a powerful minister. After the acquittal of this remarkable man, and his retirement to Daylesford, in Gloucestershire, Sir John Sinclair frequently corresponded with him upon the subject of agriculture and finance. Those who have considered Hastings merely as a grasping and ambitious despot, bent on extorting the last rupee from a distant and unprotected population, would be astonished to observe the kindly feeling, the anxiety for the comfort of the poor, and the interest in the details of rural economy, which are continually evident throughout his correspondence with my father.

In January, 1797, Mr Hastings writes, "I will venture to promise, that, if you are fortunate in the choice of your agents (and very able there are), India, and Bengal especially, will furnish you with more new materials of knowledge in all that relates to the useful arts of life, than all the societies of Europe united. I particularly specify Bengal, because it possesses a greater range of enquiry than either of the other two presidencies, and a vast field of discovery lately opened to it by the acquisition of the Sanscrit language, and the numerous writings of a remote antiquity, which are yet extant in the possession of the Bramins, and easily attainable from them."

On the 25th of July, in the same year, he renews the subject, and advises that his correspondent, then President of the Board of Agriculture, should request

Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, to cause a search by the Asiatic Society into the ancient Sanscrit records for information upon the subject of husbandry. He bestows upon Sir John Shore a commendation, which he himself deserved, that of possessing "a liberal mind, capable both of extending its operations beyond the present bounds of his official charge into the researches of science, and of making their results useful."—"I regret exceedingly," he adds, "that it never occurred to me to make enquiries concerning the husbandry of that country, as I have reason to believe that it is conducted upon excellent principles; though there, from the poverty of the cultivators, who are almost of the lowest rank in society, and from the inconsiderate rapacity of their landlords, and of others placed in occasional authority over them, they are not always perhaps applied so completely as they ought to be."

In the year 1795, when a scarcity was apprehended, Mr Hastings wrote a letter to my father, suggesting a plan, "not," he says, "as the means of remedying that evil, which I hope has no existence, but as the means of remedying the effects which proceed from the belief of it." The plan is not stated; "but," says he, "I should be sorry that it were published, because that part of it which may lay claim to any thing like argument, ought most especially to be kept from the public eye; since every suggestion of a probable insurrection of the people deduced as a

consequence from an assigned cause, is in effect a justification of it. As to myself," he adds, "perhaps no man living feels less inclination to obtrude himself on the notice of the world."

In the same year, Mr Hastings gives some insight into his own political sentiments, and offers, with much delicacy, advice to his correspondent, which might perhaps have been advantageously adopted. "I have followed your movements in Parliament with a constant and interested attention, and early foreboded the failure of your bill for a general enclosure. No man can estimate more highly than I do Parliamentary independence; and I am afraid that, if I had had a seat in the House of Commons, I should have thought it my duty to give my vote generally on that side which you appear lately to have chosen. Yet I should have been pleased in every such instance to hear your voice opposed to my own; and if I had the happiness to be numbered amongst the friends of Sir John Sinclair, I should avail myself of that privilege to say to him, that the interests of which he has charge are too great to be sacrificed to any other consideration of general obligation."

My father paid a visit at Daylesford shortly before the death of Mr Hastings, and was delighted to find the fallen statesman neither regretting the past, weary of the present, nor apprehensive of the future. He was occupied with philosophical investigations, full

of cheerfulness, notwithstanding the vast amount of obloquy and ingratitude which had been heaped upon him, and supporting with Christian patience and resignation the infirmities of declining years. Many were the transitions which, during his long life, Sir John witnessed in respect to popularity and public estimation ; but the history of Warren Hastings, in his opinion, presented the most remarkable of all. He remembered the time when Hastings, charged with the darkest crimes—an object of general detestation, stood at the bar of the House of Commons, a thin, sickly, broken-down man ; and preparatory to his unfortunate defence, addressed extemporaneously an auditory consisting chiefly of declared enemies or of doubtful friends, in the simple but affecting words : “ I am well aware that my fortune, my liberty, my life, my personal honour are too insignificant to occupy the attention of this august assembly ; but I am forced into my present situation.” And my father lived to hear that the same man, then arrived at fourscore, on being called to the same bar as an adviser, where he had once stood as a culprit, was received with acclamations by the whole senate, who spontaneously rose to do him honour.

In consenting to the impeachment of Warren Hastings, as well as in carrying on the Westminster Scrutiny, and the other measures before adverted to, Mr Pitt acted contrary to the opinion, not only of Sir John Sinclair, but of many old and attached friends, who,

notwithstanding their dislike of "the Coalition," were obliged frequently to vote against him. My father now began to think that long possession of power at an early age was gradually exercising an injurious influence upon the mind and character of the Minister. He was alarmed to see almost unexampled power wielded in the legislature by a young man whom he considered arbitrary, dictatorial, and impatient of advice. Under these circumstances, as he could not conscientiously connect himself in public life with Mr Fox and Lord North, he endeavoured to form an intermediate party, which, free from the bitterness of the regular Opposition, would still exercise a salutary control over the measures of Administration. This third party consisted of Lord Rawdon (afterwards Marquis of Hastings), Mr Rolle (afterwards Lord Rolle), Mr Bastard, member for Devonshire, Mr Loveden, member for Abingdon, Sir John Macpherson, once Governor-General of India, and other country gentlemen. From their adherence to neither party, and their occasional hostility to both, this body gradually acquired the title of "the Armed Neutrality." The ties which united this association were but few and feeble—indeed so feeble, that among its rules there was an actual provision that every member should at any time be at liberty to withdraw his name without any imputation of having left his party or deserted his principles. Mr Bastard, the mover of this accommodating resolution, privately



informed Sir John that he thought it absolutely necessary, "we," said he, "having so many *loose men*."

In 1788, my father took a leading part in forming an association to promote discoveries in Africa. Hitherto Europeans had visited Africa to plunder, to oppress, and to enslave;—the object of this society was to promote the cause of science and of humanity; to explore the mysterious geography, to ascertain the resources, and to improve the condition of that ill-fated continent. In furtherance of their designs, they employed able and ingenious travellers to penetrate into the interior, and collect information upon all subjects interesting to the philosopher or the philanthropist. Towards the expenses of these missions each member paid an annual subscription. The management of the funds, the choice of agents, and the business of correspondence were intrusted to a committee, consisting of the following persons, chosen by ballot :—Lord Rawdon, Bishop Watson, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr Beaufoy, and Mr Stewart. "The result of their labours," says Murray, "has thrown new lustre on the British name, and widely extended the boundaries of human knowledge. They have earned a solid and permanent glory, and have acquired higher claims to the admiration of mankind than many of those whose achievements fill the first place in the page of history."\* Their list of missionaries contains names

\* *African Discoveries*, vol. i. 5.

immortal in the annals of human intrepidity, those of Ledyard, Lucas, Houghton, Horneman, and Park. When Ledyard was asked by Sir Joseph Banks, "How soon will you be ready to set out?" his answer was, "To-morrow morning."

Among other papers I find the following familiar reference to a meeting of this society. "On Saturday the African Club dined at the St Alban's Tavern. There were a number of articles produced from the interior parts of Africa, which may turn out very important in a commercial view; as gums, pepper, &c. We have heard of a city where Major Houghton, our geographical missionary, is going, called *Tombuctoo*: gold is there so plentiful as to adorn even the slaves; amber is there the most valuable article. If we could get our manufactures into that country we should soon have gold enough. Mr William Bosville was on Saturday unanimously admitted a member of the Society." \*

Many years afterwards the Baronet became a member of another Philanthropic Society, which had Africa for the scene of its operations. A letter from Sir Sidney Smith, dated Paris, 6th January, 1817, thanks him for his subscription, and states the objects of the institution to be immediately the deliverance of European captives in Barbary, and ultimately the civilisation and settlement of that savage country.

\* Lady Sinclair's uncle, before referred to.

“ Such an opening,” he says, “ for the idle and the turbulent, especially in France, would insure the tranquillity of Europe.”

It was on the Regency question, in 1788–9, that Sir John Sinclair’s estrangement from Mr Pitt first became conspicuous. At the close of that year a report from the King’s physicians was laid before both Houses of Parliament, declaring that his Majesty’s indisposition rendered him incapable of attending to public business; that judging from their experience in similar cases, there was a fair probability of his recovery; but that no time for that happy event could be fixed upon with any degree of certainty.

This announcement, as might be expected, produced great activity among the several parties which divided the country. All of them felt that a struggle must now be made for the acquisition or the preservation of office. The party to which we have referred under the name of the “ Armed Neutrality,” began to exert themselves. My father wrote immediately to Lord Rawdon, requesting that he would come without delay to London, and received from him the following reply:—

“ Donington, Nov. 27, 1788.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ I return you many thanks for your obliging information. I agree with you that many will now close with us, who were before wavering; therefore,

as you are on the spot, sound those whom you think so inclined. Particularly advert to that body which we talked about in our last conversation. They ought to go decidedly with us, if a question comes on upon Thursday next : for we can allow them little merit if they stand by to see which side preponderates. I know not where Popham and Wotherston are to be found ; but I hope the call will bring them up. Upon Monday I shall wait upon you some time between two and four, for I shall certainly be up, although Sir W. Clinton has not moved out of the house I am to occupy. I have the honour to be, my dear sir, your very faithful servant,

“ RAWDON.”

A question of the utmost difficulty and delicacy now arose ; how to provide for the exercise of the royal prerogative ? Mr Fox, and his party, swayed by the legal opinion of Lord Loughborough, maintained that the King's incapacity amounted to a civil death ; and that the Prince of Wales was legally entitled to assume the Government. Mr Pitt, on the other hand, contended that to assert the existence of such an inherent right in the Prince of Wales, or in any one else, independently of a Parliamentary decision, was little less than treason to the Constitution. He insisted that the Prince had no more right to supply the existing deficiency in the Government than any other subject ; but at the same time admitted

that it was expedient for Parliament, under certain restrictions, to offer him the Regency.

After much discussion, Mr Pitt, in a committee of the whole House, moved the three following resolutions; "1<sup>st</sup>, That the exercise of the regal power was interrupted. 2<sup>d</sup>, That it was the right of Parliament to supply the defect; and, 3<sup>d</sup>, That it belonged to Parliament to determine the means of giving the royal assent to bills respecting the exercise of the regal power during the continuance of his Majesty's indisposition."

While these resolutions were under discussion in the Committee, Sir John communicated his opinion of them to his friend Bishop Watson, who thus expressed entire concurrence with his views.

" Cambridge, Dec. 14, 1788.

" Dear Sir John,

" Your note followed me to this place. I like your proposition very well. It accords with my own ideas, which are, that the Prince of Wales has no right to exercise the functions of the executive power without the designation of the two Houses of Parliament, but that the Houses of Parliament have no right to give their designation to any person whatever, except the Prince of Wales. I mean to be in town on Tuesday, and am with great regard,

" Dear Sir John,

" Your very faithful servant,

" R. LANDAFF."

The opinion of Sir John and the Bishop on this intricate constitutional question seems to have been intermediate between that of the two great rival leaders. In opposition to Mr Fox, they denied the existence of an *inherent right* in the Prince of Wales to the Regency on the mere declaration by Parliament of the King's incapacity ; while at the same time, in opposition to Mr Pitt, they insisted that it was not only *expedient* for Parliament to offer the Regency to the Prince of Wales, but that to no other individual could it be constitutionally offered.

Mr Pitt's resolutions passed the Committee, but when the report was brought up, Sir John embraced the opportunity to make a few remarks, and to request some farther explanations. With respect to the first resolution, "no man," he said, "could deplore its necessity more sincerely than himself. He considered the second to be unnecessary, as no motion had been made declaring the Prince's right to the Regency. Had such a motion been brought forward he would have strenuously resisted it. In the third resolution, there was something dark and mysterious. He gave the Minister credit for too much manliness of mind to suppose that he would endeavour by an equivocal declaration to entrap the House, and fetter its future proceedings ; but before the bringing up of the Report, he wished all ambiguity to be removed. I am afraid," he continued, "that the two Houses will be called upon to exceed their constitutional powers ;

and I am anxious, at this crisis, that no step should be taken in the dark, but that our whole proceedings should be clearly understood."

Mr Pitt replied, that he had already explained his plan when he proposed the resolutions. To supply the defect in the legislature, arising from his Majesty's indisposition, a commission was to be issued under the Great Seal, appointing Commissioners, who, with the usual forms, should open the Session in the King's name, and signify the royal assent to a Regency bill. Into that bill the Minister intended to introduce restrictions on the power delegated to the Regent; but it was clear that no such restrictions could be proposed were an address at once voted to the Prince of Wales praying him to take upon him the office. Mr Pitt, at the conclusion of his speech, insisted that the method of procedure which he proposed was alone consistent with the principles of the constitution.

In reply to this assertion, Sir John Sinclair expressed the utmost astonishment that the Minister should term such a system of measures consistent with the principles of the Constitution, when it was contrary to law. Every gentleman, conversant with the statute-law, knew, that by the 13th of Charles II., it was declared illegal for the two Houses to exercise legislative authority without the King; by the same statute also, the assertion that they had any such power was pronounced high treason in the person making it, and he was declared liable to all the pains

and penalties of premunire. "A precedent," he says, "designed to legalize an infringement of a solemn act of the legislature, and at the same time tending to overturn the most sacred principles of the constitution, cannot be justified except by the most urgent necessity—a necessity not at present existing."

Sir John insisted that the best and plainest mode of procedure was by an address from both Houses to the individual on whom all eyes were fixed, as the only proper person to take upon him the executive authority; in like manner as our ancestors had addressed the Prince of Orange at the memorable era of the Revolution. The honourable Baronet laid great stress on the distinction between *creation* and *legislation*. "If the throne," says he, "is vacant, the two Houses can create a king, as was done at the Revolution, or reestablish a royal family, as the Restoration can testify; or if the throne is full, but the king incapable of acting, and if no remedy has already been provided to supply that defect, the power of nominating a representative of the Crown to act in such an emergency seems naturally to devolve upon them. On this distinction," he added, "between creation and legislation, the very existence of the monarchy depends. For if it be held as an unalterable law of the land, that the two Houses must have a supreme or executive Magistrate, whose assent, either by himself or by a proxy, is essential to the validity of their acts, the sceptre must for ever remain secure; whereas,



if once the theory be discovered, and boldly acted upon, that any phantom, or pageant, set up by the two Houses, and obeying their injunctions, can answer the purposes of legislation, as constitutionally as a monarch, or third estate, it is impossible to say to what extravagant length men's ideas may be carried, regarding the inutility of that branch of the legislature. The next step will be, to dispense with that branch altogether."

The Report was received, and the resolutions transmitted to the Lords for their consideration. Mr Pitt afterwards named the day on which he would propose his plan of a regency.

On the arrival of Lord Rawdon, the "Armed Neutrality" had frequent meetings, and through the intimacy of that nobleman with the Prince of Wales, had ready access to Carlton House, so that the intended change would probably have placed its leaders high in office. On this point, Mr Bastard thus writes to Sir John (21st Jannary, 1789), "I hope every thing at that meeting was entirely to your satisfaction, and that the foundation was laid of the country's benefiting by your having some official situation of the first rank, in which those talents which are already known to the world might have full scope for action. I shall always rejoice in every good which attends you, though one of my greatest pleasures in Parliament would be to run in the same political tract together."

The day on which Mr Pitt had pledged himself to

lay before the House his plan for a regency, was the sixth of January. On the fifth, the "Neutrality" dined together, and were joined by Mr Loveden, who had arrived that morning from Berkshire. In the course of conversation with my father, this gentleman stated that his constituents at Abingdon were greatly dissatisfied with the proceedings in Parliament, and wished much for another examination of the physicians as to the state of the King's health ; adding, that if Sir John would second him, he would move next day for another examination. The least difficulty started by my father would have prevented the motion ; but it appeared to him, that as the nation had not suffered from previous delays, a short additional delay was not likely to be detrimental. Four weeks had elapsed since the physicians were examined ; and reports were in circulation, that their opinions were not faithfully communicated to the public. Sir John therefore encouraged Mr Loveden to bring forward his proposition.

Next day, accordingly, on the motion of Mr Pitt, that the order of the day be read, Mr Loveden rose, and having dwelt upon his known independence, moved, to the astonishment of both parties, that the physicians be called in to inform the House whether the symptoms of the King's health were such as gave reason to hope for his Majesty's speedy recovery.

This proposal, however unexpected, was not very unwelcome to either party, though neither would

have ventured to bring it forward. Mr Pitt hoped that the King might recover during a minute and protracted examination; while Mr Fox appears to have expected that the report would be so decisive as to the permanence of the King's malady, that all pretence for restrictions would be removed.\* After a feeble opposition, Mr Pitt consented to withdraw the question of the order of the day, and himself moved for a Committee to examine the physicians. A delay of eleven days in the progress of the Regency Question was thus obtained; and in the mean time, while the Bill was in progress through the House of Lords, its necessity was obviated by the King's recovery. The intervention of Mr Loveden proved as important as it was unexpected. Had the Bill thus impeded passed into a law, and had the Regent actually assumed the government, a new Administration and a new line of policy would have inevitably been the consequence. The King is well known to have declared, that under these circumstances, no earthly consideration would have induced him to resume his office. How must it have contributed to his tranquillity, when the clouds which overshadowed his reason had passed away, to

\* From a letter to Mr Perceval, I find that, in 1810, when the Regency Question was again under discussion, my father took the same view with Mr Fox in 1789, and considered the probability of the King's recovery to be the best justification of restrictions. In the latter instance, as his Majesty had more than once recovered from short illnesses, there was reason to hope that his disease would not be permanent.

find the same friends in power whom he had been accustomed to confide in, and the same measures in progress which had received his approbation ! \*

Before leaving the Regency Question, I may introduce a letter to Sir John from W. Payne, Esq. Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, which illustrates the feelings of his Royal Highness upon that important subject, and at the same time notices those intrigues commenced a year before to disturb my father's interest in his native county ; which intrigues I have already mentioned as having originated in his independent conduct at the trial of Hastings :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I take the earliest opportunity of expressing my concern at any probable cause of disquiet to you, which may arise from the meditated opposition to you in the north, and which regrets I am directed to convey to you on the part of the Prince, who will feel himself very happy in being of any service to you. I shall therefore beg to hear from you, whenever any specific exertion of his may be useful to you, and to assure you, that I am persuaded he will readily embrace the occasion whenever it offers.

\* Writing to my father in 1798, Sir John Macpherson says —“ The recovery of the King saved us from a civil war. I wished the Prince at that time to send for the opposite chiefs, and force their attention to the common danger. The French Revolution did what he might have done—it brought Pitt and Portland together.”

“ I feel great pleasure from the sanguine hopes you entertain of success, in spite of all the efforts that are used against you, which I trust will be with you (as we hear from many of our friends in different parts of the country) daily enfeebled. I think people’s eyes are opening fast, and the *tyranny* of the present *reigning youth* will and must diminish his sway very speedily.

“ I hope we shall soon meet in town, as I think all hope of a dissolution seems to be at end with Mr Pitt, and every month, I think, becomes of serious consequence to him. I am, with great regard, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

“ J. W. PAYNE.

“ Pavilion, Brighton, Oct. 14.”

Among the questions agitated at this time, both in and out of Parliament, was the abolition of the Slave Trade. On the laudable exertions of those truly Christian patriots, who, with so much energy and perseverance, laboured to put down that odious traffic, it would be needless to enlarge. The name of that great and good man, William Wilberforce, will occur to every reader as the champion of the oppressed African, in the long struggle which preceded the final triumph of humanity.

Sir John Sinclair had been intimate with Mr Wilberforce for many years, and agreed with him in his general principles, although he differed from him as

to their application. He conceived the plan of the abolitionists to be sweeping and precipitate; and thought that, where the interests of the several parties were so complicated, caution was peculiarly necessary. On the 26th of March, 1791, after the subject had been repeatedly debated in Parliament, Sir John wrote a letter to Mr Wilberforce, containing a distinct statement of his views. As moral principle was here in question, he attaches comparatively no importance to the inevitable losses which the shipping interest would sustain by the annihilation of a lucrative trade; nor even to the fact, that the cultivation of the West India islands must remain stationary, or might even retrograde, if no fresh importation of slaves from Africa were permitted. He anticipates, however, with much apprehension, that a very difficult and delicate question would certainly grow out of the abolition, as to the emancipation of the slaves then in our colonies. "If," he asks, "you abolish the trade in slaves, how can you, with consistency, retain in slavery the negroes now in the West Indies?" He also apprehended that, if other nations did not concur with us, the trade would be *transferred* rather than *abolished*; and perhaps transferred to parties who would carry it on with greater vigour than ourselves. He therefore proposed that other Christian powers should be solicited to combine with us in this great philanthropic work; and that a loss, which humanity ought not to regret, should be shared alike

by all. "The abolition," says he, "must be universal, otherwise it will be inoperative. It will be a sacrifice injurious to ourselves, and useless to those whom it was meant to benefit."

Among the most valuable services to the public, performed by Sir John Sinclair, was the establishment of a society for improving British wool, an institution which the depressed state of pastoral economy at that period rendered peculiarly necessary. Wool had for centuries been the staple commodity of Great Britain. The duties upon this production had, from the days of the Plantagenets and the Stuarts, formed a considerable branch of the royal revenue; and numerous laws upon the subject had been enacted both by the English and Scottish Parliaments. At the same time, however interesting as a natural production, however valuable as a necessary of life, or however lucrative as an article of commerce, wool, previous to the year 1790, had not received attention either from scientific or practical men suited to its great importance. Not a single individual throughout Europe, with the exception of M. D'Aubenton, keeper of the royal flocks in France, had adequately united theoretical with experimental knowledge. Particular breeds of sheep had been improved to a considerable degree, both at home and abroad; but the improvement did not result from any well-digested system. Physiologists also had a general acquaintance with the natural history of the animal;

with its comparative anatomy and peculiar habits, as developed in various districts and countries of the world ; but the effects of climate, food, and management had not been accurately ascertained, nor had any work been published which could sufficiently instruct the shepherd how to manage, much less how to improve, the stock intrusted to his care.

The pernicious consequences of this prevailing ignorance and neglect were beginning to be severely felt both by the wool-growers and woollen manufacturers of Great Britain. In consequence of improper treatment, the quality of British wool had been progressively deteriorating. The use of turnips and other coarse aliments had communicated an increasing coarseness to the texture of the fleece. Importation had augmented ; and the British isles were becoming daily more dependent on foreign imports for the finer fabrics ; a dependence the more alarming, as Spain alone could at that time furnish us with the raw material. Previous to the war with Spain, the average import of Spanish wool amounted to two millions of pounds ; the amount then sunk to half a million, showing that the necessary supply could not be obtained. After the peace, the import rose in 1787-8 to upwards of four millions, proving an increased dependence on that country. A war with Spain, therefore, it was evident, might deprive our manufacturers of a material indispensable to the fabrication of their most valuable cloths.



A very serious question now arose, what measures should be adopted for the removal or diminution of this national evil. On directing his attention to the subject, it appeared to Sir John Sinclair a surprising fact, that the Shetland Islands, situated several degrees north of Edinburgh, should produce a description of wool adapted to the softest and finest fabrics; and he felt anxious to ascertain the reason of that peculiarity. An accidental meeting with a clergyman from Shetland, who was attending the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at Edinburgh, afforded him an opportunity. From this gentleman he obtained much valuable information, which he communicated to the Highland Society of Scotland. This public-spirited body nominated a sub-committee, of which our agricultural baronet was appointed chairman, to make enquiries into the subject of Shetland wool. On the 23<sup>d</sup> of July, 1790, this committee gave in a very able and accurate report, drawn up by their Chairman, and accompanied by letters from Dr James Anderson, an eminent agriculturist, and from two ministers of Shetland. The limited funds of the Society, however, were expended on so many other important objects connected with rural economy, that a sufficient sum could not be appropriated to enquiries and experiments so extensive as those which Sir John Sinclair had in view. He resolved, therefore, to institute an association, having exclusively for its object the improvement of British

wool. He wrote letters to a number of landed proprietors, developing his plan, and soliciting their co-operation. A large meeting of individuals interested in the subject took place accordingly at Edinburgh, on the 31st January, 1791, who formed themselves into a society for the important object specified. To this new institution, the Highland Society delegated the care of the wool and woollen manufactures, and transferred to them the property of the sheep which it had procured for purposes of experiment.\*

On being elected Chairman, Sir John Sinclair delivered an address, which he was requested to publish, as a valuable exposition of the design of the institution. In this paper he commences with stating some questions, at that time undetermined, respecting pastoral economy, and with regard to which much ignorance and prejudice prevailed; and, in particular, he animadverts upon the gratuitous assumption that all attempts to produce fine wool in Scotland were a vain

\* Among those who from the first saw the great importance of the Society was the celebrated Bakewell. In a letter to my father, dated Dishley, 7th April, 1791, he says, "I shall stay in London a few days (at the Swan Inn, Lad Lane), and will take the liberty of waiting on you, and of conversing on that important subject, on which you are so laudably engaged, and shall think myself very happy in rendering you any service in my power, considering the improvement of the fleece and carcase, as of very great consequence, not only to the landowners, but to the manufacturers of the kingdom." He afterwards suggests some sources of information, of which he hoped my father would avail himself.

and impotent struggle against nature. He proceeds to explain the objects which the Society should have in view, namely, to collect specimens of the best breeds, foreign and domestic ; to disperse them, by way of experiment, over the whole kingdom ; and to excite generally a spirit of improvement in this department of national industry.

Among his numerous calculations to show the value of sheep-farming, he remarks, that about 100,000 head of cattle were sent every year from Scotland to England, and that to keep up this supply, a stock of three hundred thousand was required. The same quantity of pasture, he argued, that supported these cattle, would maintain 1,200,000 sheep, affording an equal quantity of meat, and at the same time several million pounds weight of wool.

With the view of drawing general attention to the newly-formed institution, the Chairman resolved to hold a grand sheep-shearing festival, a kind of exhibition at that time without example, although now familiar to the public. The place fixed upon for the meeting was Newhall's Inn, near Queensferry, about ten miles from Edinburgh. The cotemporary journals describe at great length the preparations made for this fête, and the enthusiasm which it called forth. All the company wore pastoral decorations of various sorts. Sheep of different breeds were exhibited, with specimens of their wool ; the process of shearing was performed by rival clippers from all parts of the coun-

try ; a collation followed, and the Chairman's toast, " the Royal Shepherd of Great Britain, and success to his flock," was answered by a salute of twenty-one guns from the Hind frigate, then at anchor in the Frith.

The first object of the Society was to procure specimens of sheep from all quarters. No exertion of influence, no expenditure of money was spared to make this collection complete. Nobility and gentry, farmers and amateurs, outvied each other in their contributions to the flock of the Society. Sir John presented 100 sheep, which he had himself already procured, and which included the Spanish, the Herefordshire, the Southdown, the Cheviot, the Lomond, and the Shetland breeds. The eminent experimentalist, M. D'Aubenton already mentioned, sent from Burgundy, at the request of the Chairman, specimens of the real Spanish sheep intrusted to his care by Louis XVI. This valuable flock, after escaping the dangers of the sea, encountered still greater perils on their landing. They were seized upon at Brighton by the Customhouse officers, who, in virtue of some obsolete and barbarous law, threatened to have them slaughtered for the use of the poor ; nor was it without difficulty, after a troublesome correspondence with the Treasury and Customhouse in London, that these intended victims of fiscal intolerance were liberated. King George III. honoured the British Wool Society with his patronage, and presented them with speci-

mens of rams from the royal flock. In the course of one year from its commencement, the Association, by gift or purchase, accumulated about 800 sheep, natives of all countries, from Abyssinia to Sweden, from Shetland to South Wales.

These breeds were all distributed over Scotland, being either sold or lent to gentlemen who undertook to make the experiments contemplated by the Society.

Nor were the above the only measures taken by this active and patriotic institution. Several of the members, together with the Chairman, made tours of observation among the pastoral districts to ascertain the state of sheep farming. Experienced and intelligent agents also were employed for the same purpose. Their tours, containing much valuable information with regard to all the native breeds of sheep, were afterwards published by the Society. The first of these tourists (Mr Andrew Kerr), surveyed the north of Scotland, and originated the idea that a fine woolled sheep, called "*the long hill sheep of the East Border*," might thrive amidst the hardships of a Highland pasturage. A year afterwards, three store-farmers, from the Borders (Messrs Redhead, Laing, and Marshall), were employed to ascertain the state of sheep farming in the principal counties of England. To their report Sir John annexed an account of the long hill sheep, to which he gave the name of *Cheviot*, stating as his reason that it was found in greatest

perfection among the Cheviot hills, and that he wished to name it after a district so memorable, both in the history and legends of the country.\*

In 1794, another agent (Mr Nasmyth) was sent through the southern districts of Scotland, and thus completed a circuit of nearly all Great Britain.†

After having completed this general survey, the Society discontinued its labours. The effect, however, of the knowledge thus accumulated, and the spirit thus awakened, began every where to be discernible.

The remote islands which, by the peculiarities of their pastoral economy, had suggested the establishment of the institution, first profited by its discoveries. Premiums were offered for the improvement of Shetland wool; and so much was the quality bettered, that prices rose considerably in the market, and an addition was obtained of L.3000 a-year to the rental of the proprietors.

By Highland graziers and landowners the Society ought to be long and gratefully remembered for their introduction of the Cheviot breed of sheep, which is

\* See Observations on the Different Breeds of Sheep, addressed to Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, Chairman of the Society for the Improvement of British Wool, by Messrs Redhead, Laing, and Marshall. Edinburgh: 1792.

† Nasmyth mentions, at page 24 of his Report, that even then the *long hill sheep* of the East Border were better known by the name of *Cheviots*. The short hill sheep were in some places termed the *Forest* or *Linton* breed.

now completely naturalized over the whole north of Scotland ; adding wealth to a country immemorially poor, and fertilizing immense districts previously abandoned to sterility. It is calculated that there are now about 300,000 of this breed diffused over the four northern counties alone. Both in the highland and lowland districts the rent of sheep pasture has risen out of all proportion to that of other landed property in any part of Great Britain. Farms which, while stocked with coarse-wooled sheep, or with black cattle, had been of little value to the owners, now yield a large rent ; or have been sold for many times the amount which in their former state they would have produced. This increased value has been caused in two ways. Not only do the pastures become naturally richer as sheep walks than when fed upon by cattle, but the augmented revenue of the landlord has enabled him to expend more money in enclosing, draining, and otherwise improving the soil. One estate which, under the old system, did not yield three hundred a-year, has sold for upwards of fifty thousand. Another estate, near Fort William, rose from L.150 a-year to L.1600 or L.1700 ; and the estate of Reay, which previously had produced from L.1200 to L.1500 a-year, brought no less a price than L.300,000.\*

\* See a tract by Sir John Sinclair, entitled, " Account of the Origin of those Cattle Shows," &c. p. 3. Nasmyth, in his Tour, already quoted, mentions an experiment made in 1792,

The exertions of Sir John Sinclair in extending the Cheviot breed generally throughout Scotland were gratefully acknowledged by various proprietors. "I am perfectly convinced," says Sir William Pulteney, in a letter, dated 14th January, 1804, "that the nation owes you great obligations for having introduced the Cheviot breed of sheep. I have myself profited by it. A sheep farm of mine in Annandale now pays me double rent, by changing the old sheep stock to the Cheviot."

Even in England the labours of the British Wool Society produced salutary results; not only did it extend to a high degree the knowledge of sheep farming in general, but it gave the first hint of those sheep-shearing festivals, which, by combining pleasure with utility, have proved so valuable a stimulus to the industry of the British grazier. The meetings held by the Duke of Bedford, by Mr Coke of Norfolk, and Mr Curwen of Workington, will of necessity be in the recollection of the reader.

I shall conclude this subject with a remark quoted by Mr Hay of Hopes, in East Lothian, to ascertain the merits of the Cheviot, as compared with the black-faced sheep. The result explains the facts referred to in the text. The Cheviot were found to be in better condition than the black-faced breed; they were also more prolific; a larger number could be pastured on the same farm; the quantity of wool produced was one-third more; and while the wool of the Cheviot sheep sold at 19 or 20 shillings per stone, that of the black-faced sheep fetched only from 8 to 10 shillings.



Dr Coventry from Arthur Young. “ The importance of improving the breeds, of whatever kind, is greater than may be at first imagined; for, reckoning the sheep of England only at 25,000,000 : if their return was raised only one shilling a-head, the improvement would amount to L.1,250,000 annually. Those who have paid attention to these subjects must be sensible that the double is a very trifling rise indeed, in comparison with what has been effected in various districts.” \*

\* Coventry's Remarks on Live Stock, postscript, p. 8. Ed. 1806.

## CHAPTER V.

French Revolution—Meetings at Mr Windham's—Exchequer Bills—Plan of licensing Bankers—Origin of the Board of Agriculture—Arthur Young—First Battalion of Fencibles—Second Battalion—Captain Fraser—Marquess Cornwallis—Lord Moira—Exchequer Bills for the Colonies—Loyalty Loan—Thoughts on Peace—Suspension of Cash Payments—Lord Moira—Duke of Northumberland—Lord Malmesbury's Negotiations—Letter to Lord Thurlow—Neutral Party—Income Tax—Scotch Representation—Addington Administration—M. Otto—American Correspondence.

WHEN the war of the Revolution broke out, Sir John Sinclair appears to have participated in the sentiments of Mr Burke, as to the necessity of carrying it on with vigour, in the expectation of speedily and triumphantly overturning the Jacobinical government of France. By many estimable men the Revolution was at first contemplated with enthusiastic approbation and extravagant hope, as the dawn of a new golden era in the history of the world—the rise of “another nature and a new mankind.” While religionists, like St Martin, were expecting the predicted reign of righteousness, philanthropists were looking forward, with prospects no less visionary, to a political millennium. They could not shut their eyes

to the fearful prognostics of democratic triumph. The thunder of the approaching tempest fell upon their ear ; but they anticipated that the convulsion, terrible as it was, would serve to purify the political atmosphere, and be succeeded by universal calm, by freedom and social happiness. They viewed these events as a lesson to tyrants, written indeed in blood, but perhaps on that account the more instructive.

Succeeding events, however, either moderated or destroyed the hope of these sanguine speculators, and at the same time justified the alarm sounded by the original anti-Jacobins. Meetings were at this time held by the friends of Mr Burke at Mr Windham's house in Hill Street, to devise the most effectual means of arresting the progress of revolutionary principles, and to press upon Ministers the necessity of a vigorous and decisive policy. In connexion with these meetings, an incident occurred, to which my father frequently reverted as remarkably exemplifying the influence of circumstances, in themselves the most trivial, over the fortunes and pursuits of individuals. Mr Burke had proposed that the party should assemble at the Duke of Portland's (Burlington House), instead of Mr Windham's, and the latter undertook to inform Sir John of this change. Mr Windham intrusted a letter on the subject to the care of Mr Elliot, who left it at the Baronet's lodgings, without adding any particular injunction that it should be forwarded ; so that, before it came into his hands,

the decisive meeting had been held which ended in a coalition of the Portland party with Mr Pitt. The following is the document which was unfortunately so long in reaching its destination :—

“ Dear Sir John,

“ I set out this morning from Hill Street with the purpose of calling on you, which I regret that I was prevented from executing. I wished to state to you, more fully than I could by letter, the detail of proceedings that have taken place since I saw you, and the nature of the meeting to-night at Burlington House. The object of the meeting is professed to be for supporting a vigorous prosecution of war ; nor differs, that I know of, from any that might have been held at my house, except in its drawing with it an accession of strength, which could not be on any other ground. If you should feel no objection to continue at Burlington House the same course of conduct, nearly in the same company, as marked our meetings last year in Hill Street, I shall be happy either to meet or to accompany you there ; and to supply in this manner the omission of a notice which the Duke, of course, could not take upon him to send. I am, dear Sir John, your very obedient and faithful servant,

W. WINDHAM.

“ Hill Street, January 20, 5 o'clock.”

Great changes in the Administration resulted from this meeting. Several of the Portland party were admitted into the Cabinet, and others obtained inferior appointments. Overtures were afterwards made to my father, but every situation of any consequence had been disposed of in the interval, while the reason of his absence was unknown. He resolved, therefore, to support in general the measures of the Administration, and to maintain at the same time his independence. What might have been the result to him of forming a close connexion with the Ministry at this period—whether continual intercourse and familiar acquaintance with all their plans and motives would have led him steadily to support them ; or whether, on finding that the revolutionary government in France could not be speedily overturned, he would have separated from them on the questions of economy and of peace, is a point which of necessity cannot be determined.

In the year 1793, soon after the commencement of the war, commercial difficulties to an alarming extent began to prevail throughout the country. In this emergency, Sir John Sinclair's abilities as a financier were opportunely and beneficially exerted. It is to the honour of Mr Pitt that he was willing to adopt the suggestions of a former friend from whom he had been recently estranged. The necessity of energetic and well-digested measures appears from the following description of the general embarrassment

and apprehension by a contemporary annalist. “ From the sudden stagnation of trade, the disappointment in the immense speculations into which the merchants and manufacturers had entered ; the sudden stoppage of the exportation to France ; the risks to which the commerce of the country must be exposed, and the alarms which the friends of Administration had excited ; a general paralysis appeared to seize the country, and the number of bankruptcies exceeded all that had ever happened in the most calamitous times. An immense number of families were reduced to beggary and ruin ; the manufacturers in several of the most flourishing towns were reduced to desperation. Several emigrated ; numbers enlisted in the army ; and such was the general distress, that each man looked upon his neighbour with suspicion ; those who were possessed of property appeared at a loss where to deposit it ; and those who experienced pecuniary distress knew not where to look for relief.” \*

Having devised a method for restoring the commercial credit of the country, my father intimated to Mr Dundas that he proposed to move for the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the subject. Mr Dundas answered as follows :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I received your letter respecting the state of public credit in this country. Government has been

\* Annual Register.

paying great attention to the subject. I am very doubtful of the propriety of any measure being brought forward, but I am sure, unless something definite was previously arranged, the appointment of any committee to take up the subject, loosely and without one seeing before them, might produce mischief, with very little prospect of doing good. If you have any specific ideas to state, I shall be very glad to hear them, and remain yours faithfully.

“ HENRY DUNDAS.”

In consequence of the hint in the above letter, Sir John, on the 16th April, developed his plan, in a letter to Mr Pitt, who, some days afterwards, proposed an interview on the subject in the House. To this succeeded another meeting, when the members were fixed upon for a Select Committee on Commercial Credit, to be immediately proposed.

The evil to be remedied was a sudden deficiency in the circulating medium. Many houses, which had issued circulating paper without sufficient capital, had already failed; and many more of great solidity were in danger of being obliged to stop payment from inability to convert their funds into money or negotiable securities in time to meet the pressure of the moment. Persons well acquainted with the state of commercial credit in London, as well as throughout the country, described to the committee the absolute necessity of immediate and energetic remedies; they enumerated,

without specifying names, many great mercantile and manufacturing houses on the eve of insolvency, and quantities of goods unable to find a market from the total want of private confidence. These deplorable details made a suitable impression on the Committee, and prepared their minds for my father's proposition, "that his Majesty should be enabled to direct that Exchequer bills to the amount of five millions be issued to certain commissioners, to be by them laid out, under regulations and restrictions, for the assistance and accommodation of such persons as may apply; and who shall give to such commissioners proper security for the sums that may be advanced for a time to be limited."

It was objected to this measure, by Mr Fox and his friends, that the proper mode of granting relief (if relief were to be granted) was through the bank; and that the Commissioners might exercise a dangerous influence by estimating the securities offered according to the political sentiments of the applicant.

The bill, however, passed in the month of May: twenty Commissioners, including the author of the measure, Lord Sheffield, Mr Wilberforce, Mr Pulteney, and Mr Thornton, were appointed to carry it into execution. They were to receive no remuneration for their services. In his original statement to the Minister, the ingenious projector said, "To make such a measure go down, some public spirit must be shown by individuals; and Lord Sheffield



and Mr Pulteney, I am persuaded, would join with me in taking the burden of that duty without any emolument whatever."

No sooner was the intended issue of Exchequer bills made known to the public, than Sir John received letters from all quarters, expressing approbation of the plan, and urging despatch. "Some scores of manufacturers," says Mr Cock, "have come to London from Manchester, Scotland, &c. in anxious expectation of getting some of the bills." He afterwards entreats my father to get the bill printed before it was committed; a plan which he conceived would make a difference of some days. "And as I am impressed," he adds, "with a strong conviction that even a few days may be at this crisis a great object, I hope you will excuse my suggesting to you how important it is that this or any other arrangement which would produce despatch should be adopted."

The following letter, written by Gilbert Hamilton, Esquire, in the name of the Magistrates and leading Merchants of Glasgow, testifies the anxiety and distress prevalent at this time in the south of Scotland :

"Glasgow, 30th April, 1793.

"Sir,

"I have, in the name of the Magistrates and a number of gentlemen concerned in the commerce and manufactures of this city, to return you their sincere and hearty thanks for your early communication of a



could be altered to Glasgow and its ports, it would be of much more real use, as Glasgow is the centre of the whole manufacturing part of this country; and the goods could with more facility be received and examined, and the business conducted more perfectly than at any other place. In the event of this (which is a matter of great consequence) being agreed to, or even if Port Glasgow were to be adopted, the Commissioners should be named here, as they would be better judges both of the applications and of the circumstances of the applicants, and the nature and extent of their trade, than could be done by persons not residing in this part of the country.

“ We have no doubt of manufactured goods being received as well as the raw materials at the port of importation; and therefore we hope this, upon being properly stated, will be granted, as, unless manufactured goods are received, it will give no effectual aid; and, indeed, all the gentlemen here whom I have conversed with wish such aids only to be given on real property, and not on the security of the credit of individuals.

“ These things I have taken the liberty of stating to you as the sentiments of the people here, having no doubt of your paying such attention to them as you may think they deserve, and shall esteem it a particular favour if you would give me your opinion. Permit me, sir, to return you my own acknowledgments for this new proof of the unwearied pains you

have taken, and the manner you have interested yourself for the interests of this part of the kingdom, and trust the plan will have all the success you can wish, which will ensure the blessings and gratitude of many thousands. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient and much obliged servant,

“ GILBERT HAMILTON.

“ P.S.—I shall write you in a few days on your excellent plan for the internal improvement of the agriculture of the country, a subject of much importance.”

The two places where money was more immediately wanted, were Manchester and Glasgow. At the latter place, in particular, it was of the utmost moment that a large sum should arrive before a certain day, when great commercial settlements were to take place. The Exchequer bills could not be provided soon enough to meet the exigency. Sir John therefore endeavoured to prevail upon some eminent capitalists in London to anticipate the issue by the Commissioners. The following letters from Thomas Coutts, Esquire, Samuel Thornton, Esquire, Sir John Call, and William Devaynes, Esquire, will show the difficulties which, in meeting this great national emergency, my father encountered and overcame.

“ Strand, eight o'clock,  
Monday morning, 13th May, 1793.

“ Sir,

“ I have just received the honour of your card. The Minister, and the Commissioners he has appointed to manage the loan to the manufacturers, &c., are the best judges of how it may be most effectually applied for their relief and the public peace.

“ For my own part, wishing as I do to confine myself to the conduct of my private business, and little informed as to public matters, I cannot see how supplying the necessities of idle people can *for any time* be productive of good, as neither Government nor individuals can often repeat the means of such relief. If the money Sir John Sinclair proposes sending immediately to Manchester and Glasgow will set the manufacturers agoing, and employ these idle men, the benefit is evident, especially if there is a vent for these goods when manufactured, and that the load on hand is not already too heavy for the market to take off.

“ I think Government should manage this temporary aid by means of the Bank, without recurring to individual aid ; but if you choose to lay my letter before the Commissioners, and that *they* should think as you do, that my advancing money to-day on their certificate, directing L.20,000 of the Exchequer bills to be delivered to me on Thursday, will be of pub-

lic use, I shall be ready for one with the money to-day.

“ I certainly do not wish to gain by this operation, neither is it reasonable any one should lose. I will therefore advance L.19,000 on the L.20,000 on bills, and on Friday they shall be sold ; and such difference or surplus as may appear shall then also be paid. And I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant, ..

“ THOMAS COUTTS, ..

“ I will require a letter from the Commissioners, signifying that what I have offered will, in their opinion, be of public utility.”

*Second Letter from Thomas Coutts, Esq.*

“ Sir,

“ I have received your letter from Mercers' Hall ; but I cannot think the business is done in terms of my letter, unless Mr Macdowal, whom you mention, is to bring me a letter from the Chairman or Board of Commissioners, to say that it is their desire, and will be of public utility my giving the assistance required. I am, sir, your most faithful, humble servant,

“ THOMAS COUTTS.

“ Strand, 13th May, 1793.”

*Letter from Samuel Thornton, Esq.*

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your letter of yesterday gave me much concern, more especially as I cannot afford the relief which you wish. I came this morning to inspect the affairs of a person in London, for whom I am much interested, and whose situation requires the almost immediate advance of a large sum. As I had not leisure to see Mr Dent, I desired my brother to communicate your letter to him; and I shall be truly happy if I can be serviceable in promoting the laudable end you have in view.

“ I have some hopes that a sale of the Exchequer bills might be made in the Stock-market on the certificate. It is at least worth the trial. Believe me, dear sir, yours sincerely,

S. THORNTON.

“ King's Arms' Yard, Monday morning.”

*Letter from Sir John Call.*

“ Old Burlington Street,  
Monday morning, 13th May, 1793.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Late last evening I was favoured with your note relative to the critical state of public credit at Manchester and Glasgow, and requesting my pecu-

niary assistance towards preserving peace and good order there, from L.5000 to L.20,000. No member of the state, under which we enjoy so many blessings, is more desirous of contributing to the preservation of them than myself; but the late precarious and uncommon situation of confidence and circulation hath obliged me, and those with whom I am connected, to call forth every resource, and to keep ready such unusual means of answering all demands, that neither I nor they can assist you in the pressing necessity which you state. Every individual connected with trade or money transactions must of course look to himself and his partners, with all that care and anxiety which the unfortunate state of public credit requires; and I should therefore apprehend you will not find the resource you wished for in appealing to their aid, unless a general meeting of bankers and monied men could have been called together, and a large sum have been furnished by general consent. Independent of having any considerable sum locked up in Exchequer bills (which cannot be paid in daily circulation by bankers or merchants), there will be a loss by discount; for they cannot be expected to be so low as you state, one per cent; and unless money was more plenty, it cannot be expected that individuals or houses should narrow their own bottom, and be losers also to assist other individuals or houses. The public Treasury must relieve the public distress,



if it is so pressing as to endanger the peace and good order of government.

“ The misfortune at this juncture is, that every man of money or resources has been straining every nerve for six weeks past to support himself or friends ; and therefore they are not able to come forward and lend that support which their public spirit prompts them to an earnest wish to be able to do, on such critical occasions as you have stated. That at least is my case. You will excuse the observations I have made, and believe that no man has a higher regard for your public spirit on this and many other occasions than, dear sir, your very faithful humble servant,

“ JOHN CALL.”

*Note from W. Devaynes, Esq.*

“ Mr W. Devaynes presents his compliments to Sir John Sinclair. He is very ready to give his assistance to the public at this time ; and he proposes for that purpose to advance the Commissioners immediately L.10,000 for ten days without interest, and to be repaid by them ; or to advance L.9000 on Exchequer order or bills, to be redeemed or sold within the same time, likewise without interest.

“ East India House,  
13th May, 1793, half-past 10.”

In consequence of these negotiations, the sum of L.70,000 was forthwith remitted to Manchester and Glasgow, before the Exchequer bills on which the loan was grounded could be prepared. Mr Pitt, meeting my father that evening in the House, expressed his regret that the pressing wants of Manchester and Glasgow could not be supplied so soon as the occasion demanded. "The money," said he, "will not be ready for some days." "It is already gone; it left London by this evening's mail," was the triumphant answer. Relating this anecdote, Sir John used to add, "Pitt was as much startled as if I had stabbed him."

The effect of lending Exchequer bills exceeded even the expectations of its sanguine adviser. The difficulties, not only in Manchester and Glasgow, but throughout the whole kingdom, which embarrassed the commercial and manufacturing interests, almost instantaneously vanished; credit was completely re-established, and the Commissioners, in their report, were enabled to declare that public confidence was speedily and effectually restored; that facilities in raising money were presently felt, not only in the metropolis, but through the whole extent of Great Britain; that the embarrassments surrounding the most extensive commercial houses were thus removed; and that a number of eminent manufacturers throughout the country, who had nearly stopped their works, were enabled to resume them, and afford em-

ployment to their workmen, thus preventing them from being thrown upon the public for support. This large amount of public good was effected by the issue of so small a sum as L.2,202,000, not only without expense, but with an actual profit to the nation of above four thousand pounds, which was duly paid into the Exchequer.

While the operations of the Commissioners were going forward, the indefatigable Baronet made a journey northward, to ascertain by personal observation the state of Lancashire, and of the manufacturing districts in Scotland. Deeply interested by the straits of suffering individuals, he in some instances became himself their security to the Commissioners, and incurred personal responsibility, from which he was not relieved for many years. Among the beneficial results of the loan he had suggested, none pleased him more than to perceive the gratitude of the lower orders for the impartial attention shown by Government to the interests of all classes of the community.

Among other measures which suggested themselves to my father during his journey to the north, was the necessity of increasing the capital of the two principal chartered banks in Scotland,—a measure which he recommended to the Government, and which was afterwards adopted.

In reference to Sir John's exertions on this occasion, the patriotic George Dempster emphatically observes, in a letter written some time afterwards, "I

know nobody who ought to have more weight with the banks of our island than you, from the colossal Bank of England to the pigmy banks of Thurso and Wick."

To prevent the recurrence of a calamity which, but for an unprecedented interposition of the Government, might have been destructive of commercial credit, the Baronet drew up for the consideration of Mr Pitt, "A general view of the measures to be pursued for preventing in future a deficiency of circulation." It embraced a variety of provisions, such as improvements in the warehousing system, and in the bankrupt laws; but the most important of them related to paper currency. After pointing out the advantage and necessity of notes payable to the bearer in a country where the precious metals are not produced, he proceeds to notice the restrictions by which the issue of paper money should be limited. "Though paper circulation," he says, "may be justly accounted an important source of national prosperity, yet, unless it is kept within due bounds, it may be productive of much mischief, by encouraging unbounded speculation, and by promoting, in too great a degree, public extravagance and profusion, as well as private luxury and expense.

"According to some financiers, the best restrictions would be to prohibit the circulation of any notes in England, payable to the bearer, those of the Bank of England alone excepted. But if that Bank, by

issuing its notes, is of use to the commerce of the metropolis, must not banks on a smaller scale, by the issue of *their* notes, be equally useful to smaller towns, where it would be impossible for the Bank of England to establish branches with sufficient power in the managers to supply the wants of the district ? ”

He proceeds to remark, that the Bank of England had given ample security to the public by the large sums which it had advanced ; and that it actually paid for the privilege of issuing notes, by having agreed to accept from the Government a low interest for its loans. He contends that the same rule should be extended to private bankers ; and that they also should be required to give security, by holding stock in proportion to the extent of their issues.

He anticipates the objection, that if large sums were deposited in the funds by bankers, their means of carrying on business would be diminished ; their profits would be reduced ; and, being subjected to the continual fluctuations in the price of stock, they would want encouragement to carry on their dealings. To these representations Sir John replies, that, however large the sum deposited, the banker would derive advantages more than equal to the inconveniences. He would receive his dividends like other stockholders ; the credit resulting from his deposit would fill his coffers, and he would be enabled to carry on business with the money of other persons, securing, at the same time, an adequate interest for his own.

To this communication Mr Pitt replied, that the pressure of public business then absorbed his attention, and precluded the possibility of entering into the details of banking; but that he looked forward to a future opportunity of taking up the subject.

Following up this intimation, my father, some time afterwards, again called the Minister's attention to this important question, and received in answer a request that he would furnish him with the details of his scheme. Sir John accordingly sent a communication, entitled, "A Plan for Licensing Bankers." In this paper, it was suggested that no individual or company should be allowed to issue engraved notes, payable on demand, without a license for the purpose previously obtained; that these licenses, as in the case of Exchequer bills, should be granted by Commissioners; that similar securities should be required, either personal, landed, or funded; that each license should be limited to the amount of the sum for which security was given; and that the notes should be stamped or subscribed by some individual authorized by the Commissioners, so as to prevent issues beyond the prescribed number. The advantage which he expected from this measure was, that of raising public credit, augmenting the revenue, and providing for the country a safe, abundant, and, at the same time, not excessive medium of circulation. The following letter from Sir William Pulteney probably embodies the

objection of the Minister, with whom he appears to have held communication on the subject:—

“ Uxbridge, Sunday, 5th March, 1797. ”

“ Dear Sir,

“ I return your paper, which is very well meant, but in my opinion your regulations are not only very unnecessary, but may be attended with much mischief. No person is bound to take payment in notes ; and you may safely trust to the natural precaution of even the lowest classes that they will not accept of bad paper ; and none of the facts which have occurred in the history of this country can justify the doubts which are generally entertained on this subject, as I can most clearly demonstrate. On the other hand, if none are to act but by license, you throw power into the hands of Government which may prove very dangerous ; and the Commissioners will have salaries, and be a pretence for new places and new influence. Let trade of all kinds alone, if you wish it to thrive. Suppose, from a well-meant anxiety for the common people, no person were allowed to make shoes or stockings for them who did not take out a license and find security ; do you think they could be better served than they are now ? The same as to broad cloth and all other manufactures. I could write a volume to demonstrate the folly of these precautions.

“ I am, dear sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM PULTENEY.”

The following is Sir John's answer to this communication :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ Nothing surprises me more than your objection to the plan for licensing bankers. In all countries but this, whatever passes for money must have the stamp of the sovereign ; and it is unfortunate that the right of issuing paper is not exclusively enjoyed by the Government here ; it would have enabled us to have paid off the national debt without taxes or inconveniences. In regard to shoes and stockings, these are articles of which every one is a judge, and no one can be materially imposed upon. But bank notes are very different, and however beautifully engraved, may not intrinsically be worth a shilling. Why not put a stamp upon them as well as upon gold and silver plate ? In short, there is no end to the arguments that might be adduced in favour of the measure, which I hope the necessity of these times will bring to bear. There is no help for difference of opinion ; but that cannot destroy the respect and regard with which I have the honour to be, dear sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

JOHN SINCLAIR.

“ Whitehall, 6th March, 1797.”

During the remainder of his long life, notwithstanding much discouragement, Sir John Sinclair perse-



vered in his endeavours to secure the public from the evil consequences of an insecure paper currency. He was never able to obtain the sanction of the Legislature or the Government to his plans, but he had the satisfaction, long afterwards, to find a number of the most eminent financiers adopting and recommending the same views.\*

After the panic in 1825, there was scarcely an individual in the kingdom who did not perceive the necessity of protecting the poor from being imposed upon by the issue of notes not representing real property; but our Legislature could discover no happy medium between one extreme and its opposite. Ha-

\* Among these was the late Mr Ricardo, who, in his "Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency," p. 35, has the following remarks:—"In the case of Bank of England notes, a guarantee is taken by the Government for the notes which the Bank issue, and the whole capital of the Bank, amounting to more than eleven millions and a half, must be lost before the holders of their notes can be sufferers from any imprudence they can commit. Why is not the same principle followed with respect to the country banks? What objection can there be against requiring of those, who take upon themselves the office of furnishing the public with a circulating medium, to deposit with Government an adequate security for the due performance of their engagements? In the use of money every one is a trader; those whose habits and pursuits are little suited to explore the mechanism of trade are obliged to make use of money, and are no way qualified to ascertain the solidity of the different banks whose paper is in circulation; accordingly, we find that men living on limited incomes, women, labourers, and mechanics of all descriptions, are often severe sufferers by the failures of country banks, which have lately become frequent beyond all former example."

ving, in the first instance, allowed country bankers to issue notes without security, they afterwards would not allow them to issue notes at all for sums under five pounds.

The value of my father's services, in restoring commercial confidence, in a great national emergency, was fully appreciated by Mr Pitt. He sent for the Baronet to Downing Street, and expressed, in emphatic terms, his sense of obligation. "There is no man," said he, "to whom Government is more indebted for support, and for useful information on various occasions, than to yourself, and if you have any object in view I shall attend to it with pleasure."

Here was an opportunity of personal advancement which hardly any politician would have hesitated to improve; but the principal characteristic of my father's public life was disinterestedness. The same neglect of self, which had been manifest in former instances, here again prevailed. He replied to the Minister, that he sought no favour in his own behalf, but that the reward most gratifying to his feelings would be the support of the Minister to the institution by Parliament of a great national corporation, to be called, "THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE."

This was not the first occasion on which my father had proposed to Mr Pitt an establishment of the kind. The Minister had not altogether discouraged the project, but had objected to the probable expense. Indeed, on several occasions, the Ministry betrayed

great lukewarmness as to agriculture, and induced the friends of the farming interest to believe them altogether indifferent to that great source of national prosperity, as well as disposed to prefer, invidiously and exclusively, almost any other branch of industry. When my father mentioned to Mr Arthur Young his intention to move in Parliament for a "Board of Agriculture," the future Secretary replied that it was needless to take that trouble, as there was not the smallest chance of success. This dispute ended in a curious literary wager. Mr Young betted his nineteen volumes, entitled, "Annals of Agriculture," against Sir John Sinclair's twenty-one volumes of "The Statistical Account of Scotland." Soon afterwards, the Statistical Enquirer writes to the Annalist, that he is about to have a conference with Mr Pitt on the subject, and that Mr Young will certainly lose his bet. The latter replied, "You are going to Mr Pitt, and I am going to lose the wager; when you come from Mr Pitt, I shall win the wager. Pray don't give Ministers more credit than they deserve. In manufactures and commerce you may bet securely; but they never did, and never will do any thing for the plough. Your Board of Agriculture will be in the moon,—if on the earth, remember I am to be secretary." When Sir John announced his success, Mr Young penned the following facetious testimony of his delight and astonishment:—

“ May 19, 1793. ”

“ Upon my word, you are a fine fellow, and I have drunk your health in bumpers more than once. You begin to tread on land, and what I conceived to be perfectly aerial, seems much less problematical than before. Premiums might be made to do much good, but they would demand another thousand to the sum you propose.

“ Let me have your speech fully, and directly, and if you establish a Secretary on a respectable footing, do not forget the farmer at Bradfield.—I am, dear Sir, your faithful and obliged

A. YOUNG.

“ P. S.—The Annals are preparing, and shall be bound and gilt handsomely.”

As this gentleman will be frequently referred to in another chapter of my work, it may be right to mention here, that he was born near Bury St Edmunds, in the county of Suffolk, and was author of many valuable treatises connected with husbandry, finance, politics and topography. His greatest performance was the “ Annals of Agriculture,” which was extended to forty-five volumes octavo, and to which not only many great landed proprietors contributed, but also his Majesty King George III., under the homely signature of “ Ralph Robinson, farmer at Windsor.”

Mr Young's last work was a compilation from the bulky volumes of two dissenting writers, whose religious sentiments he had long adopted—Richard Baxter and John Owen.

As the Board of Agriculture originated with the subject of these Memoirs, and was fostered into maturity by his skill, sagacity, and unwearied perseverance, I reserve that institution for a separate chapter. The attention of the reader would be distracted and disturbed were I to intermix the subject from time to time with political and financial details.

I have now to present my father in a new character, which some may be surprised that a statesman and economist should assume. Early in the year 1794, Mr Pitt, in conversation, remarked upon the necessity of increasing the military strength of the country, in consequence of the gigantic efforts directed against it by the ablest enemy we had ever encountered. "Your estates, Sir John," continued he, "are in the north of Scotland, and are inhabited, I understand, by a race of people much attached to the military profession. I am anxious, therefore, that you should raise a regiment of fencibles; and either take the command yourself, or else nominate some friend in whom you place confidence."\* My father replied, "that he

\* The term *fencibles*, according to its ancient acceptation, included "Every man able of person to bear arms in every county of the kingdom." The word is thus explained in an old act of the Scottish Parliament; † but in more recent times

† VI. Jac. V. sect. 86.

had never thought of becoming a soldier, but that since the public service seemed to demand his exertions in that capacity, he would not hesitate a moment to comply with the request; and farther, that instead of restricting, as had hitherto been the rule, the service of the corps to Scotland, he would raise a fencible battalion for the service of Great Britain. Mr Pitt declared warmly his satisfaction at Sir John's patriotic zeal. Letters of service were issued, and such was the energy exerted in enlisting and training the men, that, only seven months from the date of their Colonel's commission, the regiment passed a favourable inspection at Inverness before Lieutenant-General Sir Hector Monro, and were pronounced an excellent and effective corps.\* The battalion was 600 strong; and as both men and officers principally belonged to Caithness, they would naturally have been called the Caithness Fencibles. In compliment, however, to the Prince of Wales, whose title as Prince Royal of Scotland is Duke of Rothesay, they obtained permission to be styled "The Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles."

Their uniform was different from that of other Highland regiments. They wore tartan trews (or it has been limited to bodies of men raised in a particular district by some powerful individual who has obtained for that purpose letters of service from the Crown. Regiments of this description were first raised in 1759.

\* This was the more remarkable, as only a bounty of three or four guineas was allowed to each man.

truis), rather than the philibeg or kilt. The Colonel was of opinion that trews, or pantaloons, were worn by the ancient Gaels, or Celts, and that this costume rivalled the belted plaid in antiquity as well as in utility and elegance.\* Here, as in other instances, he embodied his sentiments in a pamphlet. In discussing this curious question, curious from the antiquity to which it reaches, and from the spirit-stirring associations connected with it, he has given proofs of industrious research, and refers to various antiquaries, as well as to a multitude of local traditions and historical anecdotes in support of his position.† Besides trews, the Caithness fencibles wore a bonnet, and a plaid across the shoulders. The ancient garb thus revived was peculiarly becoming, to the officers in particular, nineteen of whom averaged six feet in height; and from the circumstance of their procerity

\* Hints respecting the camp at Aberdeen, 1795.

† It is understood that the antiquarian Colonel propagated his opinion on this much contested point, not only in prose but in a lyrical effusion to the tune of "Are you sure the news is true." Some of my northern readers will recollect the following verse—

" Let others brag of philibeg,  
Of kilt, and belted plaid  
Whilst we the ancient trews will wear,  
In which our fathers bled."

This song was a great favourite of the soldiers, and often produced quarrels between them and the Duke of York's Highlanders, when the two regiments were quartered at Dublin, each maintaining the superior antiquity of its own dress.

received from the common people at Inverness the Gaelic designation *thier-nan more*, or the “great chiefs.” This costume is associated with an interesting anecdote in the annals of painting. My father, one day entertaining Wilkie at dinner, happened to ask what circumstance first bent his genius to painting. “Sir John,” said the artist, “it was you made me a painter. And you did so in this way : In the course of your correspondence on statistics with my father (minister of Cults), you sent him an engraving of a soldier drest in the uniform of your fencibles. The print struck my fancy so much, that I immediately began to copy it, and continued my imitation till I determined to be a painter.” Little incidents of this kind have frequently given early bias to the latent energies of soldiers, statesmen, and philosophers ; but it is the artist especially whose vividness of imagination lays him open to these juvenile impressions.

From Inverness the regiment, in 1795, marched to Aberdeen, where it was encamped to defend the city against an apprehended attack from the French armies in Holland. Here Sir John Sinclair resided about six months with his regiment—being under orders from the Commander-in-chief to take charge of the camp. At that time encampments were a novelty in Scotland : nothing of the kind had occurred for half a century. The attention, therefore, of our military economist was directed to the subject, and the result



of his investigations was, as usual, a pamphlet, containing numerous hints highly creditable to his judgment and humanity, respecting the diet, clothing, camp equipage, and personal habits of the troops. Among his memoranda an enumeration is given of every requisite for the comfort and efficiency of soldiers.

To improve the discipline of the corps, the Colonel adopted a plan well adapted to the character of Highlanders, as appealing to their high sense of honour and self-respect. He ordered every captain to produce, on the first Monday in every month, a muster-roll of his company, specifying the name, birth-place, date of enlistment, discipline, and behaviour of every soldier under his command. This paper, familiarly termed by the soldiers "Sir John's roll," was read on parade before the whole corps; on which monthly occasion the Colonel called up each man in turn before him, and stated publicly the report given of his conduct. In some instances, where the report was highly favourable, the soldier received promotion on the spot. Occasionally he made a short speech adapted to the men and to the times. An old fencible once said to me, "I well remember one of the Colonel's speeches when his roll was read: 'My lads,' says he, 'we shall soon probably have to defend ourselves from the invaders, and every man who distinguishes himself shall be recommended to the Duke of York. Preferment is open to you all without par-

tiqity. Nothing shall have weight with me but good behaviour.' I still remember," continued the veteran, "Corporals Sutherland and Fisher being made sergeants by our Colonel on the parade ground."

Sir John considered the allowance made by Government barely sufficient for the clothing and subsistence of his men. Although he attached great importance to their soldierlike appearance, he would allow no stoppage from their pay to provide ornaments to the uniform; but supplied at his own expense such decorative appointments as he thought requisite. "My men," he used to say, "must be kept in a state physically capable of duty."

His kind intentions, however, were sometimes baffled by the characteristic forethought of Scottish troops. They stinted themselves, in order to lay up in store for the time when they should be disbanded. Some of them (though the fact applies chiefly to a second battalion about to be mentioned), during their period of service, are understood to have amassed, either through parsimony or industry, no less a sum than L.100 or L.120. There is a story of an old fencible who, on his return to his native country, obtained a piece of ground from his landlord, and began to erect a house upon it for his family. A passenger finding him busied in collecting stones for that purpose, asked him what he was about. "Building a house," said he, "and I am determined to have at least one good room, though it should cost me two pounds."

Hardly any man but a Highlander would consider a room costing only L.2 a luxury.

But natural affection was oftener carried to excess than prudence. The Colonel and his officers frequently interposed their authority to check the romantic exercise of this feeling. Some of the men avoided messing together, and almost starved themselves to save money for their friends: one man in particular did so, not for his parents, nor for his wife and children (which was a common case), but for his sister.

In dealing with delinquents, my father's custom was, if possible, to make persuasion do the work of fear. "Our Lieutenant-Colonel," said an old sergeant to me, "was a strict disciplinarian. When any of us did wrong he showed us the articles of war; but the Colonel spoke to us in private. He told us what disgrace we were bringing upon him, upon our families, and upon our country; and threatened to expose us where we should least wish our faults to be known. Many a man would have chosen the black-hole before a lecture from Sir John."

We left the regiment at Aberdeen. It was afterwards stationed for some months at Berwick. During this period their good conduct so much conciliated the esteem and regard of the inhabitants, that a deputation of the magistrates, with the mayor at their head, waited on the Colonel to present him with the freedom of the burgh. On this occasion an old Highland gentleman, resident in the town, remarked to

him, "If you don't insist on taking the oaths, this will prove a mere barren compliment ; but if you do, both you and your descendants will acquire all the privileges of freemen." Of this shrewd and well-timed hint Sir John availed himself, to the surprise of the magistrates, who had kindly offered to relieve him from the ceremonial.

In 1799, Government resolved on disbanding all fencible regiments whose services had been limited to Great Britain. The reduction of Sir John's corps, in consequence, took place in that year on Burntsfield Links, near Edinburgh. On this occasion the salutary effects of humane attention to the comfort and discipline of the men were manifest. Although the regiment had come by forced marches from Sunderland, in bad weather, not a single soldier was incapacitated for duty. When Major-General Vyse called for a list of the sick, the adjutant replied that his list was a blank ; that there was not one sick man in the whole battalion. Every individual came forward in person to deliver up his arms.

Previous to this reduction, Sir John Sinclair, in 1795, had received a second time letters of service, and had been empowered to raise a second battalion of fencibles, whose services should extend to Ireland. The corps at first consisted, like the former, of 600 men, but was afterwards augmented to 1000. They received the name of "Caithness Highlanders," and served in Ireland during the Rebellion.

... When the augmentation took place, a large proportion of the first battalion volunteered into the second, although now about to be employed in a country suffering from internal distractions and threatened with invasion; and although, in a prudential point of view, they might have been gainers by accepting the large offers made to them by the agents of militia corps. “I entertain,” says a military correspondent of my father, “the highest respect for your character, from having been a witness, a few years ago, to your regiment re-enlisting under your banner as soldiers, and that too at a period when they were tempted by numberless recruiting officers with higher bounties.”

The Caithness Highlanders were first quartered for two years in the province of Ulster. While stationed at Armagh, they received thanks from Viscount Gosford, in the name of the magistrates, for their uniform steadiness and efficiency. “Divided, from the necessity of the times,” says his Lordship, in his address to the Commandant, “into various cantonments, and many of them stationed in a manner most unfavourable to military discipline, they yet preserved the fidelity of soldiers and the manly rectitude of their national character. It is with equal pleasure and satisfaction we declare, that the tranquillity which this country is now happily beginning to enjoy, must in many respects be ascribed to the ready obedience and proper deportment of the officers and men under your command.”

The regiment was afterwards removed to the South of Ireland. In this quarter it exhibited the same steady discipline. Various high testimonials to this effect may be given. In a letter to Sir John Sinclair, General Sir Charles Ross uses these gratifying terms —“I have repeatedly had occasion to express my satisfaction with the Caithness Highlanders, and my opinion of their merit, which was conspicuous on all occasions. At a very critical period they conducted themselves with invariable steadiness and propriety.” Captain, afterwards Colonel Williamson, thus writes to the agent of the regiment: —“The Lord-Lieutenant” (Lord Cornwallis) “told me he admired the appearance of the men, and that, what he liked better, he heard the best report of their good behaviour on every occasion, and from every general under whom they had served.”

An incident, somewhat similar to what occurred on the reduction of the first battalion, and proving in the same manner the salutary effects of judicious management, took place at Cork, where the corps was reviewed by Viscount Lake. There was scarcely a sick man on the list, and the General declared, that although he had often heard before of regiments a thousand strong, he had never seen one till that day. In 1797, at Youghall, the whole regiment, excepting fifty men, volunteered, with characteristic enthusiasm, an extension of their service to any part of Europe.

In 1798, when contributions were made by private

persons for the defence of the nation, these brave men gave further proof of loyalty and public spirit. In a letter from my father in that year, I find him acknowledging, in terms of commendation, the receipt of two hundred pounds, made up of four days' pay from the private men, and a week's pay from the Officers, which he had remitted on their account to the Exchequer.

In 1800, Government, anxious to strengthen the standing army, encouraged fencibles to volunteer into the line. Two hundred and twenty of the Caithness Highlanders joined the expedition to Egypt: a greater number than was furnished by any other fencible corps.

At the peace in 1802, the regiment was ordered from the south of Ireland to Glasgow, and, after undergoing inspection by Sir Alexander Don, was disbanded.

My father's interest in the men and officers under his command in these battalions did not terminate with their reduction. I have now upon my table a pile of letters, not certainly models of epistolary elegance, but what was more important to the receiver, breathing the warmest gratitude from individuals whom he had raised from obscurity and destitution to independence, or had assisted in their rise to affluence. One or two examples may be extracted. Sergeant Sinclair, one of the volunteers to Egypt, distinguished

Sir John had afterwards the satisfaction of fully recommending the ensign to a lieutenancy.

Another of the volunteers to Egypt, Mr. Waters, obtained an ensigncy, on his father's recommendation, for having carried off the enemy, a wounded officer during the battle of Cairo.

A third case is still more remarkable. A man, named Fraser, one day presented himself to Lady Sinclair, in the absence of Sir John, begging her influence to obtain for him a commission in the fencibles. He was an intelligent man, but appeared in humble circumstances. In answer to his mother's application the Colonel stated that if the young aspirant could produce the required number of men he should receive the commission. Fraser was indefatigable in his exertions, and soon presented the stipulated number. Not long after, he presented himself as an Ensign to his father, and was sent to raise more men.



On the reduction of the regiment the Colonel applied in his favour to some friends connected with the India-House, who obtained for him a cadetship in the Company's Engineers. As Fraser had no funds, his friendly Colonel advanced the sum necessary for his equipment and passage to India. Fraser showed himself worthy of this patronage. He soon remitted the loan. He distinguished himself as one of the ablest officers in the service; amassed a large fortune; returned to England, where he purchased three estates in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Caithness; and while he lived, acted up to his declaration, that "till he ceased to exist, he never would forget Sir John Sinclair's generosity to his family and to himself."

Before concluding this account of my father's connexion with the army, I may notice two short papers, which he published, relative to the defence of the kingdom. One of them was "An Address to the Farmers of Great Britain, by the President of the Board of Agriculture; with a Plan for the more Speedy Conveyance of his Majesty's troops in the event of the threatened invasion taking place." Such was the patriotic spirit of the agriculturists at that time, that, in the county of Mid-Lothian alone, means were provided in the course of three days for the conveyance of above five thousand men, according to the plan proposed.

The other paper was entitled "Cursory Observa-

tions on the Military System of Great Britain." In this the author attributed the astonishing success of the French arms under Napoleon, in a great degree to the rapidity of their movements, and to the efficiency of their light troops. He therefore urged upon the nation the wisdom of profiting by the example of a scientific enemy. He suggested that each regiment should contain a greater number of light troops; and that separate corps of marksmen, or riflemen, dressed in dark uniform, should be added to the British army.

Before printing this paper, he circulated some of the hints contained in it among the most distinguished officers, with the view of exciting discussion on a subject which was not merely vitally important, but, as he conceived, too much overlooked. The answer which he received from the Marquess Cornwallis, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and from the Earl of Moira, will interest the military reader.

" Dublin Castle, Oct. 20, 1798.

" Sir,

" I have received your letter, dated the 13th instant, enclosing some ' Hints on Improving the Military System of Great Britain.'

" I have always been of opinion that it is of the utmost importance that the infantry of the line should be trained to move as rapidly as possible, without losing their order; and I can see no reason why every

infantry soldier, exclusive of the movements in battalion, should not also be instructed in the practice of light infantry.

“ I cannot, however, approve of the plan for composing a battalion of different descriptions of troops in the manner which you propose ; and I should even object to the present mode of attaching a company of light infantry to every regiment (which is always to be entirely separated from that corps whenever it is employed in the field), and should prefer keeping up distinct battalions of light infantry *in any service except our own*. But we are in a degree precluded from an establishment of that nature by our being under the necessity of stationing a very great proportion of our infantry in time of peace in distant garrisons, and in the worst of climates, which it would be impossible for our regiments of the line to support, if a greater number of corps were withdrawn from taking a share in the general tour of relief ; and, as the best made and most active men should be selected for the light infantry service, it would not be thought advisable to send a considerable body of such troops, at the same time, to perish in a few months in a West India island.

“ The grenadier company is formed by a selection of the largest and stoutest men from the battalion, to be employed on services in which peculiar exertion is required ; but is in every respect trained in the same manner as the soldiers of the battalion ;

perhaps it would be as well if no such establishment existed. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ CORNWALLIS.”

*The Earl of Moira to Sir John Sinclair.*

“ Donington, Nov. 5, 1798.

“ You may probably think, my dear sir, that I have confoundedly abused the latitude you allowed me when you desired I should consult my leisure in answering your letter. I never knew a man indulge himself in that convenient procrastination, without sliding into a delay of which he ought to be ashamed; an excellent excuse to make to you if you will regard it as one. There is at least merit in not vindicating one's self where one has a bad cause. You are perfectly right in your notion of the great principle of military success. Activity, much more than superiority in numbers, or in artillery, has been the source of all those triumphs which have rendered France so formidable. Of this sort of exertion the English troops ought to be more capable than the French; because the Englishman, speaking generally, is as agile as the Frenchman, and much more athletic. It must, therefore, have arisen from want of management, if the British troops have appeared in any light of inferiority to the French. I do not, however, recollect the instance in which that can be considered to

have been the case, excepting in the action at Castlebar, where our troops were so posted that they could not act or give support to each other. One important application of activity is the loose order in which the French often made their attacks, wearying their enemy by a succession of assaults, fire having a very uncertain effect on their scattered skirmishers, whilst a ball from them had a great chance of hitting some one in the mass of an army regularly formed. There are undoubtedly modes of chastising such attempts, but they are not such (depending upon cavalry) as can be employed in every position. It follows, that your infantry should be trained to act occasionally in the same thin order. I never could comprehend the advantages of forming a grenadier and a light company in a regiment. According to my conception of a soldiery, all infantry should be fit for all service in which foot can be engaged. In pursuance of this opinion, I never separated the flank companies from their battalions in the corps under me. For I trusted that a very little explanation given to the officer commanding a regiment, when one at the same time showed him the ground on which he was to act, would enable him to make a loose attack with his regiment just as well as he could with a battalion of light infantry. I might, indeed, in the course of a campaign, have detached the light companies for a particular stroke ; but it would have been from the motive of employing, under that excuse, some un-

attached or secondary officer, whom I might be more inclined to depend upon than I could on any officer that happened to be at the head of a regiment.

It was, as you justly observe, activity that gave Bonaparte his superiority over the Austrians in Italy. I dare say you have heard nonsense talked (for I have) about the advantages he derived from a new system, devised by himself, of movable columns. It is not a new system ; but it is moreover one which no general will ever practise, without being thoroughly punished for it, if he tries it against an officer who really knows his business. I could not, without great detail, explain this to you in phrases ; but I could in five minutes convince you of it, if you looked over me whilst I made a few consecutive scratches, by a scale of measurement on paper. In this assertion I do not pretend to any particular skill. The principles of tactics are much too simple to leave room for vanity in mastering them, if one will but take the trouble to reflect upon them. Every body must comprehend, that if forty men can be brought to act upon a point where only twenty are to oppose them, two balls will have their chance of hitting each of the minor number, whilst the latter can only direct one against every other man of the greater body. This holds nearly as good when you can bring up troops in proper succession to a point of attack in which the defenders cannot be renewed. The effecting this depends on your favourite activity. There must also be calculation of

the time in which certain spaces can be marched by the troops on either side; and above all, you must have made the observation of the usual effect of fire in certain situations, and of the ordinary degree of firmness of men in bearing it. Cavalry would be better in a plain than in your Highlands, armed with the Roman sword; and in an enclosed country, musketry would have a decided superiority to that weapon. You might, indeed, give your Highlanders also a short firelock of wide calibre, but then the target would be embarrassing. I shall go up to town for a few days at the meeting of Parliament, just to learn what they can project about Ireland. Adieu. Believe that I have the honour to be, very faithfully, your obedient servant,

“MOIRA.”

After the above details of a military kind, I now return to politics. I might have mentioned sooner, that a dissolution of Parliament took place in the year 1790, when my father was returned for his native county, which he continued to represent till the dissolution in 1794. As Caithness could return no member to the new Parliament, he was for some time unable to procure a seat. At length, in January, 1797, he was elected member for Petersfield, in Hampshire, chiefly through the interest of the Prince of Wales. I have before me two letters on the subject from His Royal Highness's private secre-

tary, Mr Tyrwhitt, in which it is stated that the patron of the burgh had been invited to Carlton House to complete the negotiation; and that the Prince “felt very anxious to be instrumental in adding so respectable a character as Sir John Sinclair to the House of Commons.”

While Sir John was not a member of the House, a motion was brought forward in which he much regretted that he could not take an active part. On the 11th of June, 1795, a petition was presented by his friend Lord Sheffield from the merchants trading to Granada and St Vincents, stating that, in consequence of insurrections, hurricanes, and other calamities, they were reduced to such distress as to require the aid of Parliament by the issue of Exchequer bills. The measure originally proposed by my father was quoted by the noble mover, not only as a precedent to justify legislative intervention, but as an encouragement from its success to repeat the same plan. He moved, therefore, that the petition be referred to a committee. Mr Pitt and Mr Dundas supported the motion, and expatiated on the beneficial effects which the former issue of Exchequer bills had produced on the commercial credit of the country. Mr Fox opposed the proposition, as tending to increase the influence of the crown; but a grant to the extent of L.1,500,000 was carried, and was attended by the happiest results.

On a court day in December, the same year, my



father happened to meet Mr Secretary Dundas at St James's, who pressed him to name a day for visiting him at Wimbledon. The day fixed upon chanced to be the last of the year. The party was numerous, and included Mr Pitt. Sir John remained all night ; and next morning, according to Scottish custom, resolved to pay his host an early visit in his own apartment. He found the secretary in the library, reading a long paper on the importance of conquering the Cape, as an additional security to our Indian possessions. His guest shook him by the hand, adding the usual congratulation, " I come, my friend, to wish you a good new-year, and many happy returns of the season." The secretary, after a short pause, replied, with some emotion, " I hope this year will be happier than the last ; for I scarcely recollect having spent one happy day in the whole of it." This confession, coming from an individual whose whole life hitherto had been a series of triumphs, and who appeared to stand secure upon the summit of political ambition, was often dwelt upon by my father as exemplifying the vanity of human wishes. The declaration of the same great statesman, at a later period, after he had been the object of calumny and persecution, is as melancholy, but is not surprising. " Had I remained," he said, " at the Scotch bar, I must soon have reached one of the highest judicial offices in Scotland, and might have spent a life of comfort and independence. In the important capacity

at a judge. I might have been of use to my native country, instead of entering on the career of politics. I have been exposed to much obloquy, and have lately experienced the basest ingratitude."

Less than a fortnight after breakfast, Mr Pitt offered Sir John a seat in his carriage to London. On the way, the Minister introduced a conversation upon the financial difficulties of the country, and expressed much apprehension that a new loan could not be raised without serious injury to public credit. He added, that, as the Barons had attended much to these subjects and had written a "History of the Public Revenue," he would be happy, at such a crisis, to have his opinion on the measures to be pursued. In answer to this appeal, my father stated his whole views of finance, and suggested various measures to relieve the treasury from its embarrassments. In particular, he proposed an appeal to the loyalty of the nation, calling upon each individual to lend, in proportion to his income, a sum of money to the Government, on fair terms, regulated by the rate of interest at the time. Mr Pitt at once entered into the idea, which, after undergoing various modifications, was matured into the scheme known by the name of "the Loyalty Loan," and produced eighteen millions to the Exchequer; without that injury to public credit which Mr Pitt had apprehended from a loan contracted at the time in the ordinary way. The following extract from a letter of Mr Coutts to the

Directors of the Bank of Scotland (dated 1st December, 1796), will throw some light upon this interesting transaction; and shows the Loyalty Loan to have been the germ from which branched the two great measures of finance soon afterwards proposed by the Premier; namely, that of trebling the assessed taxes, and that of taxing income.

“——You may easily conceive many difficulties must occur in every plan for raising a sum of eighteen or twenty millions; and Mr Pitt seemed to have collected, from the various information he had, that it could not be obtained in the usual way without depressing the price of the other funds very materially, and thus there might even be some apprehension of its not being negotiable at all. He therefore had determined by the plan, of which we shall send you enclosed a copy, to try whether the public spirit of the great incorporated bodies, and of the country at large, may not induce a voluntary subscription to a loan which, though not perhaps so beneficial as an investment made in the other funds, would yet, under all the circumstances, produce a very good immediate interest, and a certainty of considerable profit in a few years.

“We were about to have sent you this plan by yesterday's post, when we found there was still another meeting, and it was not till late last night that some of the last alterations were made.

“To those who will not be induced to subscribe by

public spirit, or by a sense of their own interest to sacrifice part of their fortunes to secure the rest, he means to apply by a tax, at least equal to what may be supposed to be lost by the voluntary subscribers; and he expects a good example will be set by men of high rank and in high official situations, as well as by the Bank of England and other corporate bodies; and that such a sum will be raised as will make it very easy to borrow what it may be short of the sum he wants in some other manner. Mr Pitt expects the subscription will sell at some discount, but he flatters himself the country will think, as he does, that a large and voluntary contribution may be the means of extricating it from the present difficulties, by showing its enemies we are not without resource.

“ While the war continues all must agree money must be had to carry it on with vigour; and the more unanimity and strength we show, the more willing our enemies will be to conclude a peace on fair and permanent conditions.”

The terms of this loan were of necessity disadvantageous to the lenders, being by its very name rather an appeal to their patriotism than their interest. They were to pay L.100 for every L.112, 10s. of stock, which stock would, at the market price, have produced only L.97, 10s., consequently they sustained an immediate loss of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, or L.2500 on every hundred thousand pounds advanced to the public. The necessities of the State, however, required that

a considerable additional loan should be made soon after the agreement. The price of stocks, consequently, fell, and the subscribers were subjected to a greater loss than they had anticipated. As Mr Pitt had intimated to them that no additional loan would be required, he conceived that they were entitled, not in law but in equity, to a remuneration. Several members of Opposition unsuccessfully opposed this grant in the committee, but Sir John, when the report was brought up, stated various objections, and in particular, that the subscribers ought to have prayed for relief in a petition recommended by the Crown, and had less claim to compensation, as they had expected advantage from a favourable turn of affairs. On the renewal of the discussion, he put the question to the Speaker, whether members personally interested in the grant should be allowed to vote? His decision against them was fatal to the measure; and the baronet thus saved half a million to the country, though not without incurring the displeasure of the Minister and of many powerful individuals.\*

On the termination of the Reign of Terror, and the establishment of the Directory in France, Sir John Sinclair was of opinion that the time had arrived at which peace might probably be concluded without any compromise of our national dignity or interest. He derived encouragement in this opinion from his continental correspondents, and in particular from M.

\* See Corresp. vol. i. p. 106.

Maurice of Geneva, editor of the *Bibliothèque Britannique*, and from the French Director Barthelemy. The former, in a letter dated 24th July, 1797, enlarges on the division between the Directory and the Council of Five Hundred; on the exhausted state of the treasury; and on the general desire of the French nation for peace. "For the most part," he says, "peace is wished for, even peace with England; but it is believed that the Directory do not desire it, and that their pretensions would be exorbitant. It was hoped to deprive them of the means of carrying on the war. The Council of Five Hundred endeavoured, therefore, to oppose them on the head of the finances; but the Council of Ancients not having adopted the plan, the Directory remained as powerful as ever. Not that the National Treasury offers them any considerable resources, for it is understood to be exhausted, and the pretended treasures from Italy turn out to be of little value. I know from good authority that the last remittance, alleged to be twenty millions, was only one million in cash, and three millions in plate and diamonds."

M. Barthelemy was a man of moderate political views, of great probity, and considerable literary acquirements. Sir John had corresponded with him from the year 1789, and had sent him recently some communications connected with agriculture, a branch of knowledge to which that eminent savant had paid much attention. Barthelemy, in his answer, took an

opportunity of expressing strongly his desire for peace. "I have received," he says, "with much satisfaction the note which the Chevalier Sinclair was pleased to write to me, under date of the 12th June, with the useful publication that came with it. I did not fail to make known both the one and the other to the Executive Directory. None desire more than myself to concur in the views expressed in the note of the Chevalier Sinclair, and to see the moment arrive when the two nations will know no other rivalry than such as will be dictated by their wishes to improve agriculture, and all the arts favourable to peace."

Sir John hastened to communicate the letter to Mr Pitt, conceiving that it would give him the greatest satisfaction. To his surprise, however, the Minister was of opinion that no private individual ought, under any circumstances, to have held communication with a member of the French Government; and expressed no pleasure at the pacific temper of the Director, the very individual who, on the part of France, had negotiated peace with Spain and Prussia.

It was with very different feelings that an aged and intelligent statesman, Mr Robinson, perused this interesting communication. "A thousand thanks," says he, "for your letter, and for the increased pleasure I received by your affording the perusal of M. Barthelemy's note. I have for many years, both in office and since out of office, held an opinion that

the two nations had really nothing to dispute about in these enlightened times ; and that we ought not to have any rivalry, but both equally study to improve our commerce and our country. These were my sentiments when M. Barthelemy was here, and I have never varied from them ; and I yet trust, old as I am, that I may live to see the day when those principles will be established, and pursued, to the discomfiture of ancient animosities, false prejudices, and ignorance. I have had the honour to sit in Parliament ever since the Accession Parliament, and am now 70 ; and I have often lamented the quarrels and disputes betwixt the two nations ; but received great satisfaction, indeed, in the accomplishment of the Commercial Treaty, which I hoped would still draw the two kingdoms nearer and nearer together."

Sir John now perceived that the British Government was disinclined to peace with France ; he suspected, also, that the war faction in France was powerful, and that the undecided state of the contest, by leaving each party every thing to hope, would render it difficult, if not impracticable, to adjust the terms of accommodation. Impressed with these views, he published a pamphlet, entitled " Thoughts on Peace ;" in which he endeavoured to point out powerful motives, arising from the peculiar circumstances of the times, which should induce both countries to deprecate a continuance of hostilities.

He begins by enumerating the various unworthy



causes inducing individuals to desire a prolongation of the war; self-interest, national ambition, and ill-directed patriotism. On the part of England it was maintained that no confidence could be put in the faith of the French nation; but "Is our war," he asks, "to be eternal? Shall we assume that France will grant no terms consistent with the safety of this country before we know what terms she actually will concede?" On the part of France it was alleged that having subdued all her continental enemies, she might expect to conquer England; but again he asks, "How is an island to be conquered which is defended by a superior fleet, and has an army more than capable of resisting any force that can be landed upon its shores?" He argues, that in France opinions had changed; that the Jacobinical principles which had so justly alarmed Europe were abandoned; that the reckless tyranny of Robespierre had been succeeded by regular government; and that the inviolability of property was now recognised as the basis of social order. On the other hand he argues, that France could not consider her new constitution established, her liberties consolidated, nor her conquests secured till the conclusion of a general peace; her career of victory might be arrested, or her general become a tyrant, employing his victorious armies as the instrument of usurpation. This appeal to prudence and common sense is followed up by an appeal to humanity on the horrors of a war unexampled in the magnitude

of its operations, and the number of its victims; not victims only of the sword, but of cold, and famine, and disease, amidst the heart-rending miseries of a winter campaign among the marshes of Holland, or the mountain snows of Switzerland. He concludes with a pointed address to the French nation, as follows :—“ A plain farmer like myself would be apt to say, subdue the earth with your ploughs, and do not destroy with the sword her miserable inhabitants. You have now an opportunity to exhibit the most interesting spectacle recorded in history. You must all recollect, with what enthusiastic admiration intelligence was received, that George Washington, a private citizen of America, elevated to the command of the armies of his country, and possessed of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, had resigned his power, and retired to a private station. Thence you may have some idea of the admiration with which, not only the present times, but posterity, will consider the magnanimity of the French people, if, after having waged so successful a war, they now agree to reasonable terms of peace, and restore the happiness of the universe.”

We now approach the most critical emergency in the financial history of Great Britain—the suspension of cash-payments by the Bank of England. This great establishment had long been regarded as the impregnable fortress of public credit. The nation confided in its stability nearly in the same degree as

in the uniformity of nature. The mystery which hitherto had enveloped its proceedings magnified their importance ; while its immense resources, its close connexion with the Government, and its growing influence upon the commercial and monied interests for upwards of a century, had associated its prosperity in the imagination of the public, not with the wellbeing of any one district, of any one class, or of any one branch of industry, but with the prosperity and even existence of the state itself. A combination of disastrous circumstances, however, reduced the Bank at this time to the necessity of averting bankruptcy by obtaining the intervention of Parliament. During several years a constant draught for specie had been made upon the coffers of the establishment, caused simultaneously by a fall in the price of stocks, by the depression of commerce, and by the large remittances made in the precious metals to the Court of Vienna. In January 1795, the directors represented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the necessity of making such financial arrangements as would obviate all necessity for assistance from them. Thrice, in the course of the same year, they repeated their remonstrances against his enormous advances to the imperial treasury. To the demands made by Government were added others not less formidable from country banks and private individuals. During the whole of the year 1796, apprehensions of invasion had caused a multitude of timid persons to convert their paper into

bullion, and to withdraw their deposits from the country banks. The latter had no resource against insolvency, but applications to the Bank of England. The panic which had originated in the provinces extended to the capital, and so alarming was the run upon the bank, that on the 20th February, the Directors, after resorting to the expedient of paying in sixpences, sent a deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, soliciting his advice as to the extent to which their issues of coin should proceed. In this formidable crisis, the King came immediately from Windsor, and, for the first time during his reign, held a Council on Sunday. The result was an order in Council, suspending all payments in cash till the sense of Parliament could be taken as to the best means of restoring a metallic currency, and supporting public credit. On the Tuesday following, Mr Pitt gave notice of a motion for the appointment of a select committee to take into consideration the outstanding engagements of the bank. He declared, at the same time, his perfect conviction that its resources never were more abundant, although an act of Parliament would be necessary, enabling it for a time to pay in notes instead of cash. On the 28th, when the motion was brought forward, Mr Fox inveighed at large against all the measures of Administration, both financial and political, since the beginning of the war; drew a frightful picture of the miseries to which a profligate Government had reduced the nation; and concluded by de-

manding a full investigation of the causes which had brought the country into a state, whatever it might be termed, of real bankruptcy. He was supported by Mr (afterwards Sir Benjamin) Hobhouse, and by Mr Martin, after whom Sir John Sinclair rose to deliver the opinion of himself and other independent members with whom he acted.

He insisted that the same steps should now be taken as in 1696, when the Bank was labouring under similar embarrassments ; that enquiry should be made, not only into the *outstanding engagements*, but into the *whole property* of the Bank ; and that this enquiry should be carried on, not by the supporters or the opponents of the Administration, but by independent men, in whose impartiality as well as judgment the public might place confidence.

He stated that the mischief had not come upon him by surprise ; that he had long foreseen it ; that in September 1795, he had forewarned the Directors of their danger, and had suggested to them the expediency of issuing notes for various sums, down to two pounds, not immediately convertible into specie—a measure by which the evil might have been effectually averted.

He was of opinion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer underrated the extent of the change, rendered necessary by the present crisis, in the monetary arrangements of the country. The Right Honourable gentleman intended that the notes of the Bank

should be a legal tender from *individuals* to the *public*. “But,” says Sir John, “the question next arises, are bank-notes to be considered a legal tender from the *public* to *individuals*? If not, public affairs can no longer be carried on; for there is not specie enough in the country to pay all the public creditors. A further question is, are bank-notes to be a legal tender from *individual* to *individual*? If not, I am persuaded that one-half the public may be sent to jail for debt, and that the other half will become bankrupts.”

Mr Fox’s sentiments were embodied by Mr Sheridan, in an amendment on Mr Pitt’s motion, proposing the insertion of the words, “and also to enquire into the causes which have produced the order in Council of the 26th instant.” The amendment was rejected by a majority of 244 against 86.

The report of the committee on the affairs of the bank stated that the surplus capital, after a deduction of the debts, amounted to L.3,382,689, inclusive of a permanent loan to Government, amounting to L.11,666,800 in 3 per cent stock. On this report was grounded an act of Parliament, confirming the order in Council, and comprehending the important clause that no person should be subject to arrest who offered Bank of England notes in discharge of a debt. A bill was also introduced, to legalize the issue of small notes by private bankers, but without those securities and limitations which my father, as we have seen, so earnestly recommended. From this period

the circulation of gold coin nearly ceased throughout the British empire. A paper currency in small notes became the general medium of circulation. This currency was, from year to year, indefinitely increased. It consequently sunk in value, and the monied price of all commodities proportionably rose. The historian of the revenue always attributed the perilous circumstances of the country at this crisis to the profusion and impolicy of the Government, but at the same time considered the measure actually adopted to be unavoidable. At first he was anxious that some plan should be devised for re-opening the Bank. He was summoned to various meetings of merchants, bankers, and financiers, upon the question. He even wrote a tract, containing some suggestions which he supposed might be effectual in restoring public credit, independent of a restriction act. Experience led him afterwards to view the subject in a different light. He regarded the restriction act as a measure dictated by sound policy, and, throughout his whole remaining life, insisted that a discovery in finance was thus forced upon us, from which all our subsequent prosperity arose. "It was a great discovery," he often said, "when a metallic medium of exchange was substituted for barter; it was also a great discovery when paper, convertible into coin, was substituted for gold and silver; but a third discovery was reserved for the present times, namely, that with an inconvertible paper currency, agriculture, commerce, and manufac-

tures might advance in a career of unexampled prosperity." It was the Bank Restriction Act, he affirmed, which enabled Great Britain to resist a confederacy of all Europe against her—to maintain armaments upon a scale of magnitude unknown to the greatest empires, ancient or modern—and to subdue the ablest and most successful conqueror who had ever violated the integrity of nations, or sported with the liberties of mankind.

The objection was often made, that all these symptoms of prosperity were a mere fancy and delusion, and that the ultimate effects of the paper system were, of necessity, as disastrous as its immediate consequences were magnificent and beneficial. But Sir John always contended that the terms fanciful and delusive, were utterly absurd as applied to a prosperity which not only produced millions of acres of additional cultivation, but multiplied factories of all kinds throughout the kingdom—crowded new docks and harbours with shipping—intersected the whole country with canals and roads—and brought new comforts to the cottage, while it multiplied the luxuries of the castle and the palace. He was also prepared to prove, that the calamities generally attributed to the paper system, arose from no cause inherent in the system itself, but from the mismanagement of politicians, both while it continued in operation, and at the period of its abandonment.

I have several times had occasion to observe that



my father's chief political connexion for many years was with Lord Moira and a party known at that time by the name of the "Armed Neutrality." Their great objects were to procure peace ; or if peace were unattainable, to carry on the war with prudence and economy, and also to effect some reform in the representation of the people. They viewed the state and prospects of the nation through the gloomiest medium. They had no confidence in the Minister, whom they considered not only acquainted imperfectly with foreign politics, but injudicious in his conduct of affairs at home, inaccessible to advice, and arrogant from the continued flattery of obsequious majorities ; who, looking up to him as a kind of oracle, and identifying his administration with the British constitution, branded all who questioned his infallibility as enemies of their country. The following letters from Lord Moira exhibit very strikingly the fear, the irritation, and the despondency of this neutral section.

" Montalto, Ballynahinch,  
October 6, 1796.

" My dear Sir John,

" You may perhaps think me indolent or indifferent for not attending at the opening of Parliament. Not so. But as nothing will now prevent the evil hour which has long been preparing for the country, wherefore should one give one's self the trouble of making an observation ? I do not the less feel for

the degradation of the British empire. Believe that I have the honour to be very faithfully yours,  
“ MOIRA.”

In the following year his Lordship's sentiments are expressed in still more dismal terms :

“ Donington, April 6.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ It will be impossible for me to be in town before Monday next. On that day I shall arrive, though I tell you truly that I see such wretched apathy in the higher ranks as makes me think it little worth while to struggle for the prevention of that convulsion which is rapidly approaching.

“ Faithfully yours,

“ M.”

“ Donington, April 24, 1797.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ When you blame me for being absent, you certainly must imagine that I was not serious in the opinion I gave you respecting the state of affairs. It is very doubtful, in my judgment, whether any management can save this country from the convulsion which is rapidly approaching. But if any measures can be successful, it can be only such as shall arise from the clear conviction of Parliament as to the extent of the danger, and the necessity of timely

prevention. This conviction is not to be infused by speeches which the individual will always regard as arising from a principle of opposition. It must be the result of the view which every man takes of the position of his own interest and security ; and, I apprehend, few who now hold advantageous situations in the community will like the prospect. As no administration can settle our affairs without a general and public-spirited exertion on the part of the country, it would be madness in any man to wish to take charge of the helm, unless he were assured of such a concurrence ; and no man can be assured of it without he be called into office by the deliberate act of his Majesty, and the independent members of Parliament. To get into office by combination or intrigue, or by improving an accidental opening for striking at the Minister, would be more than childishness. I am, therefore, as well here as I could be in London. If the storm must burst upon us, which it will do, if this wretched and polluted administration shall remain, we shall see who bears rough weather best. Faithfully yours,

“ MOIRA.”

My father afterwards wrote again to Lord Moira, urging him to lay the state of the country before his Majesty at a private audience ; and naming many independent members of Parliament, who concurred in wishing him to take this important and decisive

step. His Lordship, from his answer, appears to have despaired of making any impression on the mind of the King.

“ Donington, May 5, 1797.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ If the earnest prayer of the country, now so distinctly pronounced that the King cannot be doubtful as to the sense of the nation, has not sufficient efficacy to make his Majesty open his eyes to the crisis in which we stand, how is the representation of myself or any other individual to impress him with the danger? I would long ago have solicited an audience for the purpose, were it not for the certain misconception in his mind which I saw would attend the step; a misconception whose tendency would be to confirm him in the ruinous delusion from which we wish to extricate him. Prepossessed with the idea that the public difficulties are only such as any little commonplace dexterity may remove, he would not comprehend that an official situation could be undesirable to any man; and he would thence imagine that the statement of impending evils was only made with the interested hope of supplanting his present Ministers. No; the business must work itself out. I doubt whether it be not already too late to do any good: but at all events, it is impossible to prevent the storm, if the King do not of himself become thoroughly sensible of the nature of the exigency.

Pardon me, therefore, if I do not set out for London earlier than I had before settled, which is on Sunday next.

“ Believe, my dear Sir John, that I have the honour to be very faithfully yours,

“ MOIRA.”

It appears from the papers I have consulted, that some powerful individuals, whose personal and hereditary attachments would have led them to support the Administration, began at this time to waver, and even to adopt the same views with the noble Earl and honourable Baronet just mentioned. I may instance the Duke of Northumberland as a leading example. Even in the preceding year his Grace wrote to my father, condemning in very plain terms the measures of Mr Pitt.

“ Alnwick Castle, Oct. 28, 1796.

“ Dear Sir,

“ As you inform me that the Minister proposes to tax about one-fourth, or one-half of all the property of the kingdom, I am not surprised that by his new military requisition he intends raising one-fourth or one-half of all the men in Great Britain capable of bearing arms. This last measure appears to be a very necessary consequence of the former.

“ I am quite surprised to find by your letter that you have been jockeyed out of your seat. I really

had always understood till I received yours, that you were in the present Parliament. I fear the plan you mention will not be possible. I have already had too much trouble with Launceston to venture to risk meeting another vacancy. Many thanks for Lord Moira's, which I return you. The account is very curious. Adieu, my dear Sir John ; accept the Duchess's best compliments, together with my own, and be kind enough to offer the same in our names to Lady Sinclair. I have the pleasure to be, yours most sincerely,

“ NORTHUMBERLAND.

“ P. S.—Who could have thought at the commencement of this war that Mr Pitt would at the end of it have adopted two of the most violent of the French measures ; viz. a forced loan, and a military requisition ?”

His Grace is, if possible, still more decisive in a letter of the following year :—

“ Bath, June 19, 1797.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am very sorry to find by your letter, which I received by the last post, that our hopes of peace have vanished ; for it is my firm opinion, that without one, we must soon be undone. It will, however, be attended with some advantage to this country, if, as you imagine, it should really lead to the dismissal of those Ministers whose obstinacy and incapacity

have been the means of bringing us to the brink of ruin. With these sentiments, I cannot help feeling singularly unhappy that my present state of health should be such as to prevent the possibility of my leaving this place at present, and co-operating by my attendance in Parliament in bringing about so desirable and absolutely necessary an event. I have the pleasure to be, with great regard, dear sir, your faithful friend,

“NORTHUMBERLAND.”

This year, by a strange turn of events, Sir John Sinclair and another individual stood alone, on a remarkable occasion, in opposition to the Minister. Lord Malmesbury had been twice sent to treat for peace with the French Directory; but had been unsuccessful in both embassies. In the latter especially, he received such marks of haughtiness and insult, as had excited general indignation at home. When the papers connected with the negotiation were laid before the House of Commons, the Opposition Benches were left vacant by Mr Fox and his friends, who declared, that “finding all their counsels rejected, and their resistance ineffectual, they had resolved to withdraw from the House, leaving their antagonists to pursue their own system of policy without control. They alleged that they were weary of attending merely to be outvoted and re-

proached by Ministerial hirelings as enemies of their country."

My father, as I have mentioned, had received assurances from various correspondents abroad that the French nation were weary of the war; that the conduct of the Directory was generally condemned; and that any further manifestation of a desire for peace on the part of this country would coincide so entirely with popular opinion that the Directory must either yield or hazard a counter-revolution. Sir John communicated accordingly with the Premier, and received from him a reply interesting from its connexion with the debate that followed.

" Downing Street, Nov. 6, 1797.

" Sir,

" I have read the paper which you have taken the trouble of sending me, containing your idea of an address on the issue of the late negotiation. Agreeable to your desire, I return it enclosed, as the terms in which it is drawn, certainly do not appear to me to express adequately the sentiments which I think must be generally felt, within doors and without, at the present crisis. I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

" W. PITT."

My father had collected materials for a long address



in support of an amendment favourable to peace, but urgent private business obliged him to come forward comparatively unprepared. He objected both to the want of dignity, with which the negotiations had been carried on, and to the insulting language employed after they been broken off. Our ambassador had made proposals without insisting upon counter-proposals from the negotiators of France; and the royal declaration published afterwards was full of rash and violent invective, calculated to perpetuate animosity between the two countries. He insisted that if the French were inveterate against Britain, it was because Britain was inveterate against them; that if they wished to overturn our constitution, it was because we had evinced a desire to overturn theirs; and that the French people would be glad to be at amity and peace with us, if we would only give them clearly to understand that we did not cherish against them an implacable hostility. He moved, therefore, for such a change in the terms of the address as would evince clearly our desire to renew the negotiation upon terms honourable to both countries. Mr Bryan Edwards seconded the amendment. Mr Pitt combated these objections in perhaps the most brilliant speech he ever delivered in the House; one, I believe, of the two which he corrected with his own hand for publication. So powerful was the effect of this oration, that the friends of peace were utterly routed, and left their leader and his seconder to sustain the contest

alone. One member after another rose to entreat that the honourable Baronet would not disturb the unanimity of the House by pressing his amendment. Even Mr Wilberforce, who once before had pleaded eloquently for peace, now joined the advocates of war. Sir John, therefore, yielded, declaring that he was ready to sacrifice not only his proposition, but whatever was most dear to him, to the welfare of his country.

The following account of this debate is given in a contemporary French newspaper, *Tablettes Républicaines*, No. 14. 20th Nov. 1797:—

“ Sir John Sinclair dit qu’il voyait avec peine que le langage de l’adresse, comme celui de la déclaration publiée, était inconsideré, inapplicable à la position des deux contrées, peu propre à produire de bons effets, en ce que non seulement on y professait la nécessité d’une guerre sans fin, mais on se fondait encore sur des reproches que les papiers mis sous les yeux de la chambre ne justifiaient pas.

“ Si la France, dit-il, paraît avoir une animosité invétérée contre nous, c’est parce qu’elle pense que tels sont nos sentimens à son égard. Il demanda par amendement que les passages qui énonçaient ces dispositions hostiles, invétérées, fussent supprimés, et qu’on déclarât que, lorsque la France serait disposée à traiter en des termes raisonnables, on ne se refuserait pas aux négociations.

“ M. Pitt fit un discours très-étendu pour appuyer l'adresse. L'amendement fut rejeté.”

He soon found reason to regret that his amendment had been so ill received. A few days afterwards, meeting Mr Goldsmidt of the Stock Exchange, who had just returned from Paris, he was assured by him that the debate had been of more importance than those concerned in it supposed. “ Your motion on the Address,” he said, “ made a greater noise in France than you had any conception of; and I was assured by one of the directors, that if it had been carried, they were determined to resign. Such is the anxiety of the French people for peace, that they would have agreed to any reasonable terms, and nothing prevented a general cry to that effect, but the idea that the English people were inexorable, and had determined to carry on the war in spite of all concessions.”

On the question of peace with France, Sir John received the following characteristic letter from Lord Thurlow :—

“ 27th January, 1798.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your letter turns upon points which cannot easily or conveniently be discussed in this way of conferring. That the war was needless and unjust in the commencement, absurd and iniquitous in much of its conduct, the perpetual shifting of their ground

by its advocates affords abundant proof. That a war, so manifestly against the apparent interests of both countries, might, at many different epochs, have been concluded, admits of no doubt; nay, perhaps even now the avenue to peace is by no means shut. The behaviour of the French negotiators at Lisle was so awkward and gross, I can put no interpretation upon it. But even that uncertainty would naturally lead to change the mode of treatment, and to feel individual pulses. The parade of a congress is ridiculous, without some previous understanding between the parties; and the means of creating that which others have tried successfully, should not be neglected on our part. The fee-simple of all the ostensible terms in question are not worth the bribe which would buy them off. When you return to town, if I can be of any use to your endeavours to bring forward any thing useful, I shall be happy to discuss it with you."

As my father, during many years, had occasional intercourse with Lord Thurlow, one or two reminiscences of that extraordinary character may be here appropriately introduced. When Mr Pitt obtained permission from the King to deprive Lord Thurlow of the seals, the only Minister who could be prevailed on to undertake the formidable task of demanding them in person was Mr Dundas. The Secretary had recourse to the following expedient:—He sent a note to the Chancellor the night before, informing him that he proposed to have the honour of break-

fasting with his Lordship next day, having *very particular business to settle with him*. On his arrival, Lord Thurlow said to him, "I know the business you are come about; you shall have the bag and seals: there they are," he added, "pointing to a side-table, and here is your breakfast." They sat down sociably to their coffee, and Dundas declared, that he never saw the ex-Chancellor in better humour.

A Welsh curate, hearing that a chancellor's living had become vacant, hastened to London with a shrewdly devised plan for securing the nomination. He waited on Bishop Porteous, to whom he had an introduction, and requested his influence with Lord Thurlow. "You are not aware," answers the Bishop, "that Lord Thurlow and I are on bad terms, and that a word from me will do you harm."—"But will your Lordship allow me," says the curate, "to make use of your name, if I think that it will do me good?" Having obtained the Bishop's permission, his next step was to procure an interview with the Chancellor. When he stated his object, Lord Thurlow received him most ungraciously. "Who," he asked, "encouraged you to make this application?"

"The Bishop of London," stammered out the Curate, "told me that I might use his name; and"—

"And what right has the Bishop of London to interfere with my patronage? *You shall not have the living!*"

"Ah!" says the Welshman, in a tone of despon-

dency, "The Bishop told me that if I used his name it would do me no good."

"Did he?" says the Chancellor. "*Then you shall have the living.*" And he immediately made out the nomination.

The aspect of public affairs in 1798 continued to become more gloomy, from the increasing strength of our enemies abroad, and the increasing violence of parties at home. Sir John Sinclair became more anxious than ever that, if possible, an Administration should be formed, including moderate and practical men from both sides. On this occasion he wrote a pamphlet, in the form of a letter to Lord Thurlow, whom he selected from respect for his wisdom and integrity. He enforces the necessity of public union at home by the example of the Swiss, who in the preceding year had resolved to adjourn all domestic quarrels, and give their whole attention to the common interests of the Helvetic body, then threatened with invasion by France. He remarks that, in the speeches from the throne, his Majesty had repeatedly called for unanimity among his subjects; while his Ministers kept up a system of irritation by abusing, ridiculing, and insulting their opponents. "It is an advantage," he says, "peculiar to the British Constitution, that, besides an hereditary and a popular assembly invested with a large proportion of legislative authority, where a spirit of party must in general prevail, and where, on common occasions, it may have beneficial effects,

there is a Monarch established upon the throne, possessed of distinct powers and privileges, who has the appointment of magistrates before, whom all parties must be equal, and who must consider himself as the common parent of all his subjects. Placed in so proud and elevated a situation, what better use can a Sovereign make of his influence, authority, and power, than in critical emergencies to unite all his people, and to heal their mutual animosities? With what dignity, and almost godlike beneficence, would not the ruler of a free people appear on such an occasion; and, if successful, which I think can hardly be questioned, how little need he dread the threats and efforts of his enemies, however formidable?" The Baronet then expresses his fears that the kind of proscription under which an Opposition, powerful from its talents, as well as weight and influence in the country, were placed, might tempt them to realize those unconstitutional schemes which their adversaries imputed to them. He anticipates two objections to the proposed union of parties—that it was *needless* and that it was *impracticable*; *needless*, because the existing Ministry possessed sufficient energy and talent to save the country; *impracticable*, because the violence of both parties excluded all hope either of reconciliation or coalescence.

In reply to these objections, having pointed out the inefficiency of Ministers, and the responsibility they would incur if additional disasters befel the kingdom,

he describes the independent position of the Throne as the last resource of a divided nation, adding, that the King should look around among all parties for persons of real patriotism, and, by effecting an union among them, form an administration entitled to the confidence of the country. “The public,” he says, “can hardly be satisfied that a union of parties is impracticable, unless a further attempt for that purpose be made under the auspices of the Sovereign; and (to give it the better chance of success) enforced by the declared wishes of both Houses. If any one, after this, should venture to set up his personal pretensions, or those of his friends, in opposition to the public interests, he would necessarily and deservedly be treated with universal odium, detestation, and contempt.”

This pamphlet was published in February, with the name of the author, who soon afterwards put forth, anonymously, another tract, entitled, “Hints on the Present Alarming Crisis.” In this second effort, he states still more distinctly his alarm for the public safety, and the means which he considered necessary for averting national ruin. In the exordium, he describes the kingdom “loaded with an enormous debt, burdened with increasing taxes, scarcely longer to be patiently supported—our public credit reduced to a state of degradation which the country had never before witnessed—the Bank of England suspending its payments in cash, and brought to the verge, if not



plunged into the gulf of bankruptcy—our navy, the natural bulwark of the kingdom, in a state of mutiny and disorder—and the armies of France dictating the terms of peace to our almost only remaining ally, the German Emperor, within a few miles of his capital.”

The question then suggested itself, whether the conduct of affairs should be continued in the hands of the existing Ministry, surrendered to their opponents, or intrusted to a third or intermediate party, who might be “prevailed upon to accept of office under circumstances so critical.”

He then dwells at great length on the incompetency of Ministers—their want of energy or want of foresight, to which the public disasters must be attributed—their needless provocation of our enemies, which rendered them incapable of negotiating a peace—and their treachery and arrogance towards our allies, which unfitted them for carrying on the war. With respect to the Opposition, he remarks, that their oratorical talents were undoubted—but that if mere oratory were the sure test of ability and merit, there would be no occasion for a change in the Administration, since the Ministers had rhetoric at their command as well as their antagonists. He adverts to the eulogies pronounced by the Opposition on the French Republic; their personal abuse of all the great potentates of Europe; their unpopularity not only with the King and the nobility, but even with the people; their doubtful attachment to the consti-

tution and the character of their leader, self-sufficient, overbearing, and impracticable. In the third party he admits that there are no orators, but insists, that as flourishes of declamation were not essential to the good government of the country, the Sovereign might overlook the want of a ready or glittering elocution in the choice of his counsellors.

As, however, such an Administration, by incurring the hostility of both parties, would be placed between two fires, he proceeds to remove the erroneous idea which prevailed out of doors as to the overwhelming influence of oratory in the House. "It seldom makes," says he, "the difference of three votes at the end of a debate." The independent Cabinet in question would be formed for the purpose of retrieving the effects of misgovernment—would be supported by the consciousness of their own integrity, by the favour of their Sovereign, and the confidence of their fellow-countrymen—and would therefore be invulnerable to the fiercest invectives of spleen and disappointment, although discharged with all the skill of the most accomplished rhetoricians. "Conducted by such men," he concludes, "we can hardly fail to stand our ground. The strength of the country is great ; its spirit, were it properly roused, is high ; its resources, foreign and domestic, if properly managed, sufficient to avert any disaster affecting our essential interests, far less our existence as a great, a powerful, and an independent nation."

During the greater part of the sessions 1797-8-9, Sir John Sinclair appears to have taken a leading part in the business of the House of Commons, especially during the period when the Opposition benches were vacant. In one of his speeches he assigns this reason for the peculiar position which he assumed in opposing the financial measures of the Ministers:—  
“As so many members of the House who were formerly accustomed to take an active and distinguished part in our deliberations, have been induced to absent themselves, it is the more necessary that those who continue to attend should strenuously do their duty, stating from time to time their sentiments on the various important questions which come before us. It can hardly be expected, indeed, that the nation will be satisfied with the conduct of its representatives, unless it finds that besides those who are bound to attend, from their official duties, there are other members who will take the trouble of examining the bills brought before the House—discuss their merits or demerits—suggest corrections when necessary—and, in short, endeavour, to the best of their ability and judgment, to protect and promote the general interests of the country.”

The chief peculiarity in Mr Pitt's plans, was his departure, in 1797, from the old financial arrangement called the funding system. Instead of borrowing the whole sum wanted for the extraordinary expenses of the year, and levying new taxes to pay the interest,

time, but he conceived that the funds could not be carried further without endangering credit. While he hoped for a speedy termination of the war by coalitions among foreign powers, he perceived that the expenses incurred in maintaining the majesty and integrity of the empire during the period of national repose, were not to be anticipated. But now that our allies were successively subdued or forced to accept of peace—and now that the war promised to be protracted, though less expensive, he judged that the time was come when we were called upon to take the burden, in full, upon ourselves.

Mr Pitt's first resource was to increase the land taxes threefold; a measure which, he calculated, would produce about eight millions. (1798) he proposed, for the same purpose, an increase of the land tax; an almost violent

nual gain to the public would be L.400,000. This measure was strenuously resisted by the independent members, who still continued to attend the House. Sir John Sinclair, in particular, opposed it in a speech of great length, and stated various objections, legal, constitutional, and financial, insisting, that to make the land tax perpetual would render Ministers independent of Parliament—would encourage a profuse expenditure of public money—would cause endless confusion and litigation among owners of landed property—would give the monied interest an unfair advantage over the agricultural; and, finally, would be feeble and inoperative, since purchasers of the tax, under the disastrous circumstances of the country, could not easily be found. These anticipations as to the inefficiency of the measure were, in a great degree, realized; for after three years not more than one-fourth of the tax was redeemed.

The other financial measure of Mr Pitt, that of trebling the assessed taxes, proved inefficient also, as the produce fell short of his estimate by nearly one-half, and amounted only to L.4,500,000. Under these circumstances, he proposed that instead of the *expenditure* the *income* of the individual should determine the amount of his contributions to the public service. The Premier estimated the whole income of the inhabitants of Great Britain, from all sources, at L.100,000,000; and reckoned, therefore, that a tax of ten per cent would produce a revenue of ten

millions. Among the most remarkable peculiarities in his speech, was the difficulty he appeared to find in calculating the amount of land in cultivation, and the rent derived from it. His data were drawn from the works of Sir William Petty, from Davenant and King, two writers in the reign of Queen Anne ; from Dr Adam Smith, from Sir John Sinclair, from Arthur Young, and from a report drawn up for the Board of Agriculture by Mr Middleton. It was a source of great triumph to Arthur Young, that the same Minister, who had looked so coldly on the Board of Agriculture, found, in the result of its labours, the chief data for his most important financial measure.\*

On the 14th December, Sir John, in the committee of ways and means, stated at great length, and with much vigour and precision, his objections to the measure ;† declaring that he considered it impossible by amendments to make the proposition fit to be adopted by the House. He was opposed not merely to the details, but to the principle of the scheme. He deprecated any departure from the funding system, “ a mode of raising money which,” says he, “ some gentlemen are inclined to reprobate, because they only contemplate its defects, but which I have ever considered as the climax of financial invention—the greatest of all political discoveries—the most valuable

\* See Lecture to the Board.

† See Cobbett's Parliamentary History, vol. 34, p. 73, where the speech occupies 14 closely-printed columns.

mine that ever any nation was possessed of; and, in a peculiar manner, the source of the strength, the prosperity, and the happiness of this country." He argued that if this admirable system were abandoned at all, the abandonment should be complete, and the whole supply raised within the year. He reprobated the middle course proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a miserable expedient, the result of irresolution and incapacity, under which the country would enjoy neither the advantages of the one system nor of the other; but would labour under the inconveniences of both. The circulating medium would be wanted, at the same time, in the capital for the payment of the loan, and throughout the country for the payment of the extraordinary contributions. He denied that the new system had re-established public credit. The funds, no doubt, had risen six per cent since the last loan; but they had at that time been down at 48, a price more than five per cent lower than they had ever borne during the war with America. "And can no other cause," he sarcastically asked, "be assigned for that rise but the measure now under contemplation? Is nothing, for instance, to be attributed to the land-tax redemption bill, which, I am informed, has partially succeeded in various districts, and the beneficial consequences of which we hear so much of on other occasions?—nothing to the astonishing increase of commercial wealth, and the improvement of our agricultural resources?—

and nothing to our naval victories, to which, indeed, more than to the financial measures of the Right Honourable Gentleman, our present prosperous situation ought to be ascribed? In short, four causes are assigned for this rise of six per cent, according as it best suits the convenience of the Minister. Let us give each of them a fair proportion, namely, one and a half per cent; let us suppose that we have occasion for L.25,000,000 this year, and that we borrow the whole, instead of raising a part, on the new principle, within the year; the difference, at the rate of one and a half per cent, is but L.375,000, and for that paltry and miserable sum the whole nation is to be subjected to the grievous oppression of this intolerable measure."

But admitting the *principle* of the measure to be sound, and that the funding system should be in part abandoned, he next insisted on the *injustice* of the scheme—a scheme which made no distinction between the capitalist and annuitant; and proceeded to give various reasons, why the fairest plan would be to lay one half per cent on capital, and five per cent on income. He pointedly animadverted on the selection made by the Minister of authorities respecting the resources of the nation. "When I heard," says he, "the Right Honourable Gentleman expressing himself with so much doubt respecting various particulars, and resting on the antiquated notions of Davenant and King, and the guesses of modern authorities, I could



not help wishing that the Right Honourable Gentleman had given most assistance to an institution I had the honour of suggesting—I mean the Board of Agriculture—by which all these points, had it been properly supported, would have been, ere now, fully ascertained. It is my deliberate and solemn opinion, that no country can be well governed, unless its real situation be thoroughly known. *Ad consilium de republica dandum, caput est nōsse rempublicam.* Indeed, had not the progress of that institution been checked by those who were regardless of the interests of the country they governed, provided they could gratify their own personal spleen and resentment, we should now have been debating, not on loose calculations, and uncertain data, but on a general report upon the state of the country, founded on authentic information, which it would have been in my power before this time to lay upon the table of this House.”

He then went on to state specific objections to a tax on income, grounded on its probable inefficiency ; its inquisitorial character ; its necessary interference with the productiveness of other taxes ; its tendency to raise the price of the necessaries of life ; its injustice towards the fundholder ; as well as towards persons resident in Great Britain, but whose property lay in Ireland or the colonies ; and who would thus be under the hard necessity of contributing to the English treasury out of property not protected by English laws ; lastly, he insisted on the encourage-

ment which this odious tax would give to profuse expenditure and interminable hostilities. “ Ten millions of additional revenue,” says he, “ will be considered as a fund for borrowing, and, at five per cent, would pay the interest of two hundred millions of money.” As the surest plan for extricating the country from its financial difficulties, he suggested the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the subject ; insisting that economy and retrenchment were better than increased taxation ; and that it was more necessary to bring down the expenditure, than to raise the revenue of the kingdom. He warned the House not to be led away by those philippics against the French Directory, with which the Minister and his friends were accustomed to interlard their orations ; and by which they inflamed the passions, while they perplexed the understandings of a partial auditory. Having shown the irrelevance and injuriousness of these anti-Gallican harangues, he concludes, “ I have thus, sir, stated at some length, but not longer than the importance of the question demands, my sentiments regarding it ; and I earnestly intreat that the members of this House, divesting themselves of partiality for one individual, and of prejudice against others, will consider the subject itself dispassionately as one on which depends the future happiness of this country. Let them resolve, instead of taking a measure of this moment blindly upon trust, because it happens to be introduced by a favourite Minister—

let them resolve, on the present occasion, to see with their own eyes, to hear with their own ears, and to be directed by their own judgment. Let them be assured, if they suffer this bill to pass, that it will be an event which they themselves will severely repent of, when it will unfortunately be too late ; and which their posterity will have just cause to lament, as one of the greatest calamities that could possibly have befallen that country they were doomed to inherit. Let them also be assured, if such a bill as this meets with their approbation, that the British House of Commons will no longer be considered as that independent senate, whose conduct has formerly been looked up to with admiration and respect, both in this country and on the continent of Europe—but will be accounted a degraded chamber of commerce and finance—calculated solely for the purpose of registering the edicts of a Minister, without knowledge of their contents, or conviction of their utility.”

The exertions of the financial Baronet were utterly unavailing. The Income Tax was carried by a majority of 183 to 17. In the absence of the regular Opposition, this little phalanx of 17 was all that could be mustered against the legion of the Minister. The effect produced by my father’s speech was greater out of doors than in the House. He began to be considered on both sides as the chief advocate of economy. Persons aware of any abuse in the expenditure of public money communicated to him a large

variety of curious particulars. The strange documents before me, even from such remote quarters as the isle of Man, illustrate the facility with which a popular economist may at any time surprise the world by the extent and minuteness of his information. A clever caricature by Gilray is still extant, in which Sir John is represented under the title of the "State Watchman, or Political Economist," with a lantern in his hand "to discover robbers;" a staff "to protect the country;" a rattle "to sound an alarm;" a bunch of papers "to improve your agriculture;" and with a speech issuing from his mouth, "Shall we be satisfied with cold economy? No! let there be a vigorous system of retrenchment in all the departments of the state."

Although my father so decidedly opposed the income tax, he felt a patriotic anxiety, that while it became productive to the Exchequer it should press as lightly as possible on individuals. With this view, he printed a small quarto pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on Circulation and Paper Currency." His object was to show that every increase in the amount of commodities to be circulated, or of taxes to be raised in the kingdom, should be followed by a proportionate increase in the circulating medium: that as a greater amount of the precious metals could not be procured, paper money must be made to supply their place; that the issue of this paper should not be trusted in the hands of Government, who would

be tempted to augment it beyond all bounds, as had been done in France and in America ; neither should it be trusted to private banks which gave no security ; but that for this especial purpose, corporations should be established by charter, whose loans to the public might be a guarantee for their stability.

In the month of April, 1800, when the consolidation of the British Empire was about to be completed by the union with Ireland, Sir John Sinclair was of opinion that a favourable opportunity had arrived, of bringing forward, with advantage, the claims of Scotland to a larger share in the representation than she had hitherto enjoyed. In a letter to Mr Secretary Dundas on this subject, he contended that, by the proposed terms of Union, Ireland, as compared with Scotland, would have the privilege of sending a greater number of representatives than that island was entitled to, whether on the ground of population, property, revenue, or territorial extent. He remarked on the anomaly, that the proportion of Irish representatives in the Lower House was intended to be larger than the proportion in the Upper. There would be in the House of Lords only thirty-two Irish peers, or exactly double the number of representatives of the Scottish Peerage ; whereas, in the House of Commons, there would be no less than a hundred Irish members, although double the number of the Scottish members would be only ninety. He pleaded, therefore, upon principles of equity and justice, for a grant of five

additional representatives to Scotland, declaring, in conclusion, that although he had of late differed much from his friend, Mr Dundas, on many important political questions, yet he would cordially unite with him in urging, at so favourable a juncture, the claims of their common country.

The Union with Ireland was the last important measure of Mr Pitt's Administration. Early in the year 1801 he resigned office, and was succeeded on the 7th of March by Mr Addington, Speaker of the House of Commons. Historians have been much perplexed in accounting for the retirement of that great minister, at a period when he had accomplished one of the most arduous achievements in the annals of statesmanship, and when his power seemed impregnable to all attacks. In the year following, my father sent a paper containing the secret history of this transaction to Mr Tyrwhitt, private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, for the information of his Royal Highness, and was assured, by the following letter, that the Prince had adopted the same solution of the mystery.

“ Dear Sir John,

“ I had an opportunity yesterday morning to read to the Prince the paper you were so good as to send me, and his Royal Highness seemed perfectly to agree with you.

“ It strikes me to be very correct; but you must manage, in revising it, to show that so cunning was

P., the arch-dealer in fraud by wholesale (as Thurlow says), that though Lord Spencer and Windham went out of office against their wills, they fully believed the Catholic question to be the only cause of all the fuss ; but I strongly suspect P. and Dundas had other reasons for being off, more personal to themselves, and that the only person intrusted with their confidence was Lord Grenville. But to a better and more useful subject. When you have reflected upon Baron Lilien's queries, send me answers to them. He is a very deserving and truly patriotic Hungarian, and I am persuaded will be happy to abide by your answers.

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ THOMAS TYRWHITT.

“ Welbeck Street, 14th Feb. 1802.”

The document above referred to, is, I believe, the same which my father has published in his “ Correspondence.” The substance of it is as follows :—Mr Pitt found so much difficulty in prevailing upon the Irish Parliament to pass an act of Union, that besides employing corruption on a scale beyond example, he was obliged to make large concessions. He raised the number of representatives for Ireland in the Commons from sixty (the number originally intended), to 100, and held out hopes of emancipation to the Romanists. He accordingly insisted upon introducing a recommendation to that effect into the King's first

speech to the Imperial Parliament. To this, however, the King would not consent; and when Mr Secretary Dundas endeavoured to overcome his scruples, his Majesty replied, "that he wanted none of his Scotch sophistry," and that it was "better for him to change his Ministers than his religion." Mr Pitt and his friends conceived that the King would not be able to form a Cabinet without either themselves or the Opposition, who were also pledged to concede emancipation. But George III. was prepared for this dilemma. Having formed a high opinion of the Speaker, Mr Addington, he sent for him to Buckingham House, and surprised him with an offer to make him Premier. Addington might have declared, like Malvolio, that "some have greatness thrust upon them;" for he accepted, with great reluctance, the King's offer; and only on condition that Mr Pitt consented to the appointment. The latter did consent, though with more reluctance than even Addington himself; and consented, only because he preferred that lukewarm friends rather than inveterate enemies should be enabled to scrutinize the transactions of his administration.

My father's chief friend in the new Ministry was the Right Honourable Charles Yorke, Secretary at War, with whom he held frequent communications on military and financial subjects. Sir John's mode of introducing his first suggestion is characteristic. He relates an anecdote to impress his correspondent



with the value of the most casual hints when presented to official persons capable of improving them. “At the commencement of the late war I happened,” says he, “to be in company with some scientific men, who mentioned that the French had lately made important discoveries respecting the use of potash in the manufacture of gunpowder. Next day I dined with some merchants in the city, who accidentally stated that they did not know how to account for the fact, but that the French Government had bought up, at high prices, all the potash for sale in London; and that great quantities of the article were on board ship in the river, ready to be carried over into France. I immediately communicated the circumstance to Mr Pitt, and, to the astonishment of the public, an embargo on the exportation of potash was laid on next morning.”

When M. Otto, in 1800, was sent over by the French Consul to negotiate a peace, Sir John received two communications from him; one relative to agriculture, and the other on the subject of a passport for visiting France.

“Londres, 6 Avril, 1800. Floreal, an 8 de la République Française, Le Commissaire de la République Française en Angleterre, à Sir John Sinclair, membre du Bureau d'Agriculture, à Londres.

“Monsieur,

“Il y a quelque temps que le C<sup>en</sup>. Niou, mon predecesseur, vous a fait passer une lettre du C<sup>en</sup>. Tessier,

Membre de l'Institut National, pour vous exprimer le désir de faire en Angleterre la collection des meilleurs ouvrages sur l'agriculture, et je presume qu'il vous a prié en même temps de vouloir bien lui indiquer les livres qui meritent l'attention particulière des savans. J'ai l'honneur de vous renouveler cette demande d'après l'ordre particulier que j'ai reçu de mon Gouvernement, qui pense que le domaine des sciences et des lettres n'a rien de commun avec les discussions politiques. Bien convaincu que vous partagez ce sentiment, je me flatte que vous voudrez bien designer les ouvrages Anglais qui vous paraîtront les plus propres à repandre les vrais principes de l'agriculture ; et je vous prie d'agréer d'avance mes remerciemens de la peine que vous prendrez. J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une haute consideration,

“ Monsieur,

“ Votre très humble et obéissant serviteur,

“ OTTO.”\*

\* *Translation.*

London, April 1800.

Sir,

It is now some time since Citizen Niou, my predecessor, transmitted to you a letter from Citizen Tessier, Member of the National Institute, expressing a desire to have a collection made in England of the best works upon agriculture ; and, I presume, he requested of you, at the same time, to be so good as specify those books more especially deserving the attention of the learned. I have the honour to renew this request by the particular order of my Government, which is of opinion that the diffusion of science and literature has nothing in common

From M. Otto's second letter, it appears that Sir John had intended visiting Paris, an intention which, if he had not happily abandoned, he probably would have been compelled to remain for many years in France with the unfortunate *détenus*.

“ Portman Square, 26th April, 1802.

“ Sir,

“ In answer to your favour of yesterday, I have the honour to inform you that I shall, with the greatest pleasure, give you a passport to Paris, where you will be received with the distinction due to a man who has so successfully laboured to improve the state of human society. Believe me, with the highest regard, sir, your very faithful and obedient servant,

“ OTTO.”

Of the peace of Amiens Sir John and his political friends approved, as affording the best terms which Great Britain, considering the disordered state of her

with political discussions. Well convinced that you participate in this sentiment, I flatter myself that you will be pleased to name those English works which appear to you most suitable for disseminating the true principles of agriculture; and I beg you to accept before hand my thanks for the trouble this will give you. I have the honour to be, with much esteem, Sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

OTTO.

“ To Sir John Sinclair, }  
Member of the Board of }  
Agriculture, London.” }

finances, the immense increase of her debt, and the disasters of her allies, was entitled to expect.

Before concluding this chapter, it may be proper to introduce some notice of a very interesting correspondence which my father had carried on for some time with General Washington.

For that great and good man he had long cherished the profoundest admiration. He conceived that no individual, either in ancient or modern history, had stronger claims on the reverence of his cotemporaries, or on the gratitude of posterity. In the year 1792, Sir John addressed a letter to President Washington, enclosing papers on agricultural questions of common interest to Great Britain and the United States. The immediate and obliging answer of the President led to frequent communications from that period till his death in 1799. The most curious of Washington's letters (which amount in all to sixteen) is his reply, in December 1796, to Sir John's request that he would point out to him the most eligible situation for the residence of an emigrant in that country. The aspect of public affairs was at that time peculiarly gloomy, and my father conceived that the bold and injudicious measures of the Minister might lead to a national convulsion, and oblige him to seek an asylum in America. So friendly was the interest taken by Washington in the subject, that he wrote three copies of his reply with his own hand, one of which only (the third) was received. In this interest-

ing document, the writer gives an elaborate description of the various States composing the Union; details the different recommendations and disadvantages as well as prospects of each; the price of land, both in the northern and southern districts of the country; and concludes by giving the preference to his own immediate neighbourhood in Virginia. At the same time, it is pleasing to remark the influence of local attachments on the mind of the great republican of the New World. No English gentleman, whose patrimony had descended to him through a long line of ancestry, could be more partial to his hereditary domains than Washington was to his Virginian possessions. "To have such a tenant as Sir John Sinclair," says he, "however desirable it might be, is an honour I dare not hope for; and to alienate any of the fee-simple estate of Mount Vernon, is a measure I am not inclined to."

Other persons appear to have participated in the apprehension which led to this correspondence; and to have proposed, together with the Baronet, to seek refuge in America. Several letters are now beside me expressive of this sentiment; from them I select the following remarkable communication from Mr Lygon (afterwards Lord Beauchamp), M.P. for Worcester.

" March, 1799.

" Dear Sir John,

" When I had last the pleasure of seeing you,

you mentioned that you once had a correspondence with General Washington, respecting an estate in America. I have turned my thoughts to the subject since, and if you feel no unwillingness to renew the correspondence with the General on my account, I shall think myself very much obliged to you; and before his answer arrives, you will be able to determine what part of the concern, or whether any, it will be agreeable to take on your own account. The sum I should think of investing in an estate there, will be about L.10,000; and if you should write, you will favour me by adding, it is for a friend of yours, who voted night and day, for seven years, on every occasion, against the claim of Great Britain to America. As it will be long before an answer can be received, may I request you, if at all, to write as soon as convenient. My friend Basil, who is much obliged to you for your civilities to him at Edinburgh, is now here (last from Ireland) brimful of gratitude and praise for the hospitalities of Scotland; the only country on earth where a soldier would wish to be quartered. I am, dear Sir John, your faithful servant,

“ WILLIAM LYGON.”

In addition to Washington, Sir John cultivated the friendship and correspondence of the most eminent individuals in America—the Presidents Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe; Mr Pinkney and Mr

Rush (American ministers in London) ; Gouverneur Morris, Mr Fulton the Engineer, Dr Logan, and Dr Edwards. President Adams invited my father to the United States :—" This," says he, " is the only rising country in the world, and it rises with a rapidity that outstrips all calculation. If you, Sir John " (he adds, with republican bluntness), " will do us the honour to come and see us, you will be treated with a cordial civility, *notwithstanding your title* ; and no man will be more happy to receive you than, sir, your most obedient servant,

" JOHN ADAMS.

" Philadelphia, 2d March, 1793."

Mr Adams appears to have been well aware that republican institutions could not easily be established in an old and densely peopled country. " Europe," says he, in a letter to my father, " discovers a disposition to try over again the old experiment of elective governments ; but they will find that giving them the name of representative governments, will not prevent them from having the same effect upon the emulation and ambition of the human heart, which they have ever had."

With Mr Jefferson Sir John became acquainted at Paris, when the former, in 1786, was ambassador to France. They met at the house of the Marquis de la Fayette, and afterwards became intimate in Eng-

land. The difference of sentiment with which Jefferson contemplated the French Revolution, at the two different periods of its commencement under a specious show of liberty, and after its close in a military despotism, is manifested by a comparison of two letters which he wrote, at an interval of twelve years, to my father. In 1791, he says, "We are now under the first impression of the news of the King's flight from Paris, and his recapture. It would be unfortunate, were it in the power of any one man, to defeat the issue of so beautiful a revolution. I hope and trust it is not, and that, for the good of suffering humanity all over the earth, that revolution will be established and spread through the whole world." His tone, in 1803, is very different; he seems to have anticipated the necessity of Great Britain renewing hostilities against Napoleon. "We are still uninformed here," he says, "whether you are again at war. Bonaparte has produced such a state of things in Europe, as it would seem difficult for him to relinquish in any sensible degree; and equally dangerous for Great Britain to suffer to go on; especially if accompanied by maritime preparations on his part. The events which have taken place in France have lessened, in the American mind, the motives of interest which it felt in that revolution; and its amity towards that country now rests on its love of peace and commerce. We see, at the same time, with great concern, the position in which Great Britain is placed; and should be



sincerely afflicted were any disaster to deprive mankind of the benefit of such a bulwark against the torrent, which has for some time been bearing down all before it. But her power and prowess at sea seem to render every thing safe in the end. Peace is our passion, and, though wrongs might drive us from it, we prefer trying every other just principle of right and safety before we would recur to war."

Among my father's American correspondents, there was none with whom he maintained a more frequent or more friendly intercourse than with Dr Edwards. In one of his earliest letters, the Doctor gives some curious hints as to an advantageous mode of provision for a growing family.\* "Also permit me," he says ("and ascribe it to the weakness of a friend, if I am eventually wrong), to advise you *once more* to make a provision (and very little now will do it) in our country for your descendants, not from a fear only of what may happen here, but because such property, judiciously vested in that country, rises in value beyond calculation or conception. I am not afraid of risking too much, when I tell you that a thousand pounds judiciously laid out in American lands for each of your sons on the day of his birth, may, and probably will be worth, to each of them by the day they arrive at twenty-one, not less than from ten to twenty thousand pounds—a monstrous advance this,

\* Falmouth, 5th August, 1794.

when you consider, that, did you put that sum to interest, it would only in the same time increase to two thousand pounds. A hint : Many gentlemen in exalted situations in this country are doing what I advise you to do. I have, on account of my being known to you, assisted two gentlemen to lay out L.25,000 in that way. They sought an introduction to me, and informed me afterwards that it was in consequence of their hearing I was acquainted with you ; but they requested I should not name them to you. So that you see, if it ends well, you will have done them good, though as yet they will not let you know it."

Among the Doctor's letters is a very interesting essay on the government of the United States, written at the request of his correspondent. After describing the original constitution, as well as the amended form of government in 1788, he concludes with a Transatlantic eulogium on the moderation with which a change of such magnitude had been effected. " When we reflect that government in general, under all its different modifications, has hitherto been the effect of force, fraud, or accident, it is a most gratifying circumstance, that the United States of America have produced the first instance, which the world has ever exhibited, of a constitution being maturely formed by the aggregate sense of a community, collected in a deliberative assembly ; and that afterwards, on a second and still more dispassionate, minute, and im-

partial consideration, another constitution should receive the full approbation and universal consent of that vast country ; composed of thirteen distinct and independent states, all varying essentially in their situations and dimensions, in the number and habits of their citizens, and, above all, in their respective interests and objects ; and that the people should accomplish all this without shedding a single drop of human blood, or causing a single riot ; without a tumultuous meeting, or the destruction of a particle of property, public or private—a proof this, that the government sanctioned by a majority of the citizens determined to support it, is as safe as it is just.”

## CHAPTER VI.

Improvements in Caithness—Geography—Backward and declining State—Advancing State—Roads—Tillage—Pastoral Economy—Manufactures—Trees—Villages and Towns—Fisheries—Testimonies.

As Caithness was the chief scene of Sir John Sinclair's personal experiments in agriculture and pastoral economy, and as no county throughout Great Britain has advanced so rapidly in industry, in population, and in agricultural resources, some account of that remote district may be curious and interesting to the reader. A fair comparison between the past and the present circumstances of Caithness, contrasting its backward and neglected state in former ages with its rapidly increasing prosperity and improvement during the last half century, forms a necessary tribute of justice both to the subject of these Memoirs, and to those enlightened and patriotic individuals who assisted him in effecting such valuable results.

Caithness, or the peninsula of the Catti, a tribe much celebrated by Tacitus in his Account of Germany,\* is the most northerly county on the mainland

\* "Duriore genti corpora stricti artus minax vultus et major animi vigor."—TAC. *Ger.* cap. xxx.

of Great Britain. It reaches to  $58^{\circ} 42'$  of northern latitude, and exemplifies, during the summer solstice, the remark of Juvenal on the

“ *Minimâ contentos nocte Britannos.*”

Its form is an irregular triangle, measuring from north to south about thirty-five miles, and from east to west twenty-two, containing 616 square miles. The coast is in general precipitous, but the country is flat, except towards the southern extremity, where it rises into considerable mountains. From its peninsular situation, the climate is moist, and the land subject to heavy rains and sudden floods, which sometimes sweep away the produce of the farmer.\* When my father succeeded to his estate, three-fourths of the county consisted of deep peat-moss, and of high hills covered with heath, or altogether naked. There was also some extent of drifting sand along the shores. The arable districts, however, composed of clay or loam, although not extensive, were capable of bearing large crops, and not only supplied the wants of a

\* Among the inhabitants, even events of public importance are often dated before or after great “speats,” or floods. This was, in particular, the mode of computation employed by my father’s worthy old factor, Mr Davidson, who, according to Scotch fashion, was called “*Buckies*,” from the name of his farm. Discarding customary epochs, such as the Accession, the American War, or the Revolution in France, Buckies calculated events from “the great speat” in 1784 or 1796.

scanty population, but afforded them a surplus to be exported.\*

During those past ages in which Caithness has been occasionally noticed by the historian and topographer, its agricultural condition appears to have been frightfully miserable and unpromising. The spirit of improvement, which was elsewhere making slow but gradual advances, had not reached this remote and neglected region. Bleau, in his *Atlas*, published about two centuries ago,† after enumerating, and perhaps exaggerating, the natural capabilities of Caithness, condemns in strong terms the indolence which overlooked them. “This county,” he says, “is not without many convenient situations for building towns, also very large, safe, and capacious harbours, seas abounding with all sorts of fish, a fertile soil, well adapted both for corn and cattle, and rivers fit for navigation; but the sluggishness of the people neglects all these advantages.” He goes on to describe how the inhabitants continued to vegetate on the same spot all their days, neither visiting foreigners in the way of traffic, nor visited by them.‡

\* “The great thinness of the inhabitants enables them to send abroad much of their productions.”—PENNANT’S *Tour*, vol. iii. p. 201.

† See Chap. VII.

‡ Non desunt certe multis locis urbium locandarum opportunitates, portus maximi tutissimi, capacissimi, maria omni generis piscibus plena, terra fœcunda, et messibus ac pecori apta, ac flumina vecturæ idonea; ac his omnibus ignavia parcat, ac in-

This description long continued applicable to the county. From the Report of the Committee on British Fisheries, in 1785, it appears that, during the seventeen years previous to that period, Caithness, in common with the other five northern counties, had been retrograding rather than advancing.\*

The spectacle at that time presented to his eye, both by his own property and by that of his neighbours, was to the last degree discouraging. So enlarged were his views of agricultural improvement, that he was not entirely pleased even with the condition of the most advanced districts in the South, and there was therefore little for him to contemplate with satisfaction in this sequestered northern region. In a paper, dated 1771, when he was only seventeen, he says, "There is not a county in Scotland more improvable by nature, and less indebted to art, than Caithness."

At this time, the whole north of Scotland beyond

*colæ ut plurimum pecore victitantes dominati ibidem aluntur senescuntque ; unde ora hæc exteris omnibus imo nostris minus cognita, a paucis videtur aut commerciis exercetur. Non sum nescius non nullos huic moli pares locandis urbibus animos appulisse, at cum jura, libertates, urbibus solitæ (sine quibus illæ stare non possunt) paterentur, quanquam sanctiones in id promulgatæ invitarent votorum impotes eam curam abjecisse.*

\* In this Report (p. 405), a minute calculation is made, that, notwithstanding the imposition of many new taxes, the excise revenue, from the six northern counties, had fallen off from

$\frac{93}{100}$  of a penny per head, to  $\frac{72}{100}$ .

Inverness was almost inaccessible. Even the main road along the coast was miserably defective, both in its materials and in its line of direction. It was often needlessly carried over steep hills: it was in many places narrow, and almost every where broken and uneven. Through the greater part of Sutherland, it was a mere track along the shore among rocks and sand, sometimes covered with the tide, and throughout its whole extent interrupted, not merely by dangerous ferries over arms of the sea, but by difficult and sometimes impracticable fords. So imperfect a line of communication was the clearest evidence of a scanty traffic and an indolent population. In Caithness, the ill-defined pathways, by which intercourse was kept up between different places, could hardly be dignified with the name of roads. The chief approach from the south, over a mountain called the Ord, was so difficult and dangerous, that when the coach or chaise of a proprietor was to cross, fifteen or twenty persons were employed to assist the horses. A great laird might have a larger number.\* The late Earl of Caithness on one occasion called out an array of between forty and fifty men. Though the few gentlemen in some cases possessed carriages, there was scarcely a farmer in the whole county who owned a wheel cart. Burdens were usually conveyed, sometimes on the backs of ponies, of which large herds pastured

\* Pennant's Tour may be consulted on this point, and Henderson's Caithness.—*App.* 9.



at large over the open heaths, and sometimes thirty or forty females might be seen in a line, carrying heavy burdens on their shoulders in large wicker baskets, or *creels*, under the superintendence of the grieve or manager. With the exception of a few large farms, annexed to mansion houses (or *mains*, as they were termed), the lands were in general occupied by small farmers, holding their tenements in what was called *rig* and *rennal*—that is, intermixed with one another. Beyond the outer fence of this kind of motley farm, there was nothing but an undivided waste in which the neighbouring proprietors had a joint interest. Where a field was fertile, every tenant insisted on having one or more ridges. By this strange arrangement some farmers had their lands a quarter or even half a mile distant from their houses, while the ground nearest them was frequently occupied by their neighbours. Thence arose, as might be expected, perpetual animosity.

About one-half the rent was paid in money, the rest partly in kind, and partly in the most burdensome and discouraging services. The tenants were obliged to cultivate a certain portion of land in the occupancy of their landlord, to secure his crop in the granary, and to dispose of it at market for his benefit; they were also required to furnish peats for fuel, bags for corn, and hay-ropes for agricultural purposes; to keep a certain number of cattle for his use during winter, when fodder was scarce, and to pay a tithe

of lamb and wool. The women, also, were sometimes required to supply a portion of their linen and woollen yarn for the use of the proprietor's lady.\* There were no considerable towns in Caithness to afford a market for the sale of commodities. The only two clusters of houses in the whole county were Thurso, once a place of greater note, but then a small fishing village, and Wick, which contained a few hundred inhabitants. Notwithstanding Bleau's assertion to the contrary, not a single harbour existed on the coast, nor indeed any shelter for shipping, except the open roadstead of Scrabster, and during certain winds, that of Sinclair's Bay.

The inhabitants did not attempt to compensate for the poverty of their soil by the fecundity of the adjacent seas. A small number only of herrings were caught, and these clumsily and imperfectly cured. The domestic breeds of sheep and cattle; for which, owing to the wretched state of tillage, no adequate provision could be made in winter, would naturally degenerate rather than improve. The sarcasms of Dr Johnson, on the paucity of trees in Scotland, however inapplicable to other parts of the kingdom, were altogether true of Caithness. I have now before me a folio leaf of ancient MS., containing an exact list of probably all the trees in the county. This strange document (dated 1710), which would have so rejoiced the heart of the great lexicographer, was

\* Brewster's Encyclopædia.—Article Caithness.

drawn up at Brawl Castle by the sheriff-depute, is subscribed by the minister, and countersigned by several proprietors, as well as gardeners, convened for that especial purpose. The report, thus formally and judicially attested, purports to be for the information of the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, the Earl of Breadalbane. The inventory divides the trees into barren and fruitful; and in enumerating the latter, even currant bushes are not omitted. From other minute authorities we learn the very curious process by which these rare specimens of timber had been made to grow in the fields allotted for the experiment, which we are assured are among the most favourable in the county for horticultural purposes. As the subsoil consisted of slaty rock, or till, it was necessary to dig for each tree a hole of large dimensions, over which the tenants of the neighbouring town-lands were obliged annually, for seven years, to heap a mound of compost.

The patrimony of Sir John Sinclair occupied about a sixth part of the county, and consisted of about 60,000 acres.\* The rent of this extensive territory amounted only to L.2300 a-year, encumbered at the same time with a debt of L.18,000, and an annuity of L.500.

Before I describe the measures taken by my father to remedy the evils and to overcome the difficulties

\* A much higher estimate is given in Henderson's Caithness. —See Appendix, p. 35.

above enumerated, it may be right to remark, that the nature of my work confines me to his own individual exertions. The efforts made by others do not fall within the province of his biographer. I should otherwise have enlarged with pleasure on the meritorious activity of the late Lord-Lieutenant (the Earl of Caithness), and of Mr Traill, who long held the office of sheriff, and who is now probably the ablest practical agriculturist in the North. No man did justice more readily to his various fellow-labourers in the improvement of the county than Sir John Sinclair, and no man could more abundantly afford to do so, as their efforts were the result of a public spirit, which he had himself contributed so largely to call forth.

The Baronet of Ulbster's first attempt to improve the county was made at a very early period, when, as already mentioned, he called out 1200 workmen, and to the astonishment of the people, made a road over the hill of Ben Cheilt in a single day. Some time after he made a second levy for a similar purpose, and continued his road for three miles through a deep bog called the Causeway Mire, from the circumstance that Cromwell, during his Protectorship, had ordered a kind of mound or causeway to be formed across it. These roads, although useful at the time, and valuable as incitements to industry, could not be durable, as they were not formed regularly with metal. It appears by a letter from Sir John to Lady Janet, dated 24th August, 1784, that at that early period he

had succeeded in drawing the attention of the Government to the improvement of communications through the north. "I have assurance," he says, "from both" (Pitt and Dundas) "that our roads are to be attended to next spring, and I enclose a letter from Dundas upon the subject. The bridges there can be no doubt of, but they rather grumble about assisting the roads."

Anticipating, even at this early period, the vast ameliorations since effected throughout the whole north of Scotland, my father was often heard to declare, that he hoped to see the day when a mail-coach would arrive at Thurso. This achievement, notwithstanding his success in the case of Ben Cheilt, was regarded as the visionary idea of a sanguine mind. His incredulous auditors, contemplating the numerous impediments to the progress of the vehicle through Ross-shire and Sutherland, as well as Caithness, from rivers, from arms of the sea, from mountains and morasses, used the arrival of a mail at Thurso as a by-word to express any physical impossibility. "Such a thing," they said, "will happen when Sir John's mail reaches Thurso." The mail has now been arriving daily at Thurso for many years.

The obstacles to the construction of roads through the northern counties were not likely to be surmounted at the outset without extraneous aid; and Sir John, in considering how a fund could be provided for his purpose, conceived that the balances of the

forfeited estates in Scotland were the most available resource. In 1801, therefore, he moved the House of Commons for a select committee to consider how these balances should be appropriated. Of this committee he was appointed chairman; his plan was adopted, and the result was in the highest degree beneficial, chiefly owing to a rule which he suggested, that no money should be granted to any individual or corporation, unless the claimant advanced a sum equal to that afforded by Parliament. The only exception was an unconditional grant of eight thousand five hundred pounds to the British Fishing Society, for the construction of a harbour at Wick, on the ground of an outlay already made by that body of large sums for public works.

A few years afterwards, Sir John had some communication with the Right Hon. William Dundas (a relative of Lord Melville), as to the origin of these northern improvements.

The following laconic note accompanied a paper from that gentleman, giving a slight historical sketch of these transactions:—

“ Bath, Saturday.

“ My dear Sir,

“ In a rainy morning I have hastily written the facts as they were. ‘The plan originated with you,’ and on every proper occasion I will declare it.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ W. DUNDAS.”

The paper alluded to in the preceding note is as follows :—“ It has been said, and warmly asserted, that the interests of Scotland were little attended to; and the example of Ireland has been adduced to show how much more active were the Irish to promote its welfare, and how much more liberal Parliament had been found by the large supplies voted for that country. Now it will appear that Scotland has not of late years been put under the ban of the empire, nor have the Scotch Members been inattentive to their country, nor has Parliament withheld the means necessary for its improvement.

“ A few years ago the northern counties were inaccessible; true, indeed, the droves of cattle passed, and the drivers could climb the hills with their cattle, and swim the river with them when it barred their way. This was the case previous to 1801. About that time Sir John Sinclair proposed to the late Lord Melville to apply to Parliament to appropriate L.50,000, arising from the forfeited estates, to the useful purpose of opening these northern counties, which had hitherto been shut out from improvement, and might have remained for ever barricadoed by the hand of nature, and debarred of that free communication, without which it was evident no material alteration of their state could be attempted. The administration of Pitt closed in 1801, and Lord Melville retired with him from public employment. The papers relative to Scotland were put into the

hands of Mr W. Dundas, who, in 1802, gave notice in his place that he should move to apply L.50,000 to this national object. Mr Vansittart, Secretary of the Treasury, requested Mr Dundas to withdraw the motion, and brought in a bill in the following year, appointing Commissioners, the Speaker, Mr Dundas, and others, with powers to advance, on the part of the public, one half of any estimate for roads or bridges, the proprietors of the district becoming bound to furnish their moiety. In 1816, L.200,000 had been paid by the public, and it is needless to say most splendidly beneficial have been the effects of this salutary measure. For the Caledonian Canal above L.600,000 have been advanced by Parliament, and if nothing else were attained than teaching the habits of labour and exertion to men who, before this period, never dreamed of handling a pick or a spade, but basked in the sun in summer, and huddled together in their smoky huts in winter, poor, lazy, and idle, the country has gained much by accustoming the hardy inhabitants to know their own powers, and to ameliorate, by the profits of labour, their hitherto scanty and limited means of comfort and existence.

“ The Forth and Clyde, the Crinan Canal, lately the College of Edinburgh, and the Glasgow road to Carlisle, prove incontestably that Scotland has not been neglected by those whose duty it was to attend to her interests, nor has Parliament been slow to stretch forth a liberal hand to enable the proprietors



to undertake those beneficial operations which no private contribution could alone supply, and which has, in a few years, done more than centuries preceding the present period had accomplished.”

As the first step towards a general change in the system of tillage, Sir John formed a number of large farms, which, in many instances, he enclosed and reduced to order at his own expense. To prevent that unhappy depopulation, frequently resulting from such improvements, he also formed throughout considerable tracts minute divisions, of which he granted leases for twenty-one years, at an easy rent. He built comfortable farm-houses, and added to them substantial offices, placed in central and advantageous situations. He abolished totally the *rig and rennal* system over his estates, and dispensed, at the same time, with every kind of feudal service.\* He provided mills, and obliged his tenants to adopt a regular rotation of crops, till they should learn the advantages of the method by experience. He assisted them in procuring proper seeds, especially clover, rye-grass, and turnip. He prohibited the sale of peat or turf, and encouraged the use of coal for fuel. He estab-

\* “ I was much pleased with the intention expressed in the plan you communicated to me of a total abolition of all predial and personal services, which prevail, as I have heard, to a degree in Caithness that amounts to little less than servitude—ten thousand times more prejudicial to the proprietor than to the tenant.”—*Letter from George Dempster, Esq. M.P. Sept. 1793.*

lished a mode of obtaining lime and marl at a cheap rate for the improvement of the soil. He distributed premiums to encourage industry. Holding in high esteem the husbandry of Morayshire, he laid the ablest farmers of that province under contribution for hints and suggestions applicable to Caithness. He made similar enquiries among his own neighbours, and circulated the result in tracts and papers among his tenantry. The effect of these energetic measures was remarkable. In 1812 the quantity of land improved by himself or his tenants amounted to 11,209 English acres; and the latter had the candour to confess that they had always been amply remunerated wherever they had vigorously followed out the plan prescribed for them.\* His own experimental farm of Thurso showed, in some degree, what might be done amidst the difficulties of a hyperborean climate. Mr Wright, in his Husbandry of North Britain, mentions that the richest second crop of clover he had any where seen was on a field cultivated by Sir John Sinclair.

To render productive the vast moors which occupied so large a portion of the county, Sir John procured at one time from Cambridgeshire, and at another from Westmoreland, persons skilled in fen-husbandry to try experiments of paring and burning. The measure promised at first every success; but owing to the thinness of the soil, and the expensiveness of lime, the land soon returned almost to its

\* See Henderson's Caithness, Appendix, p. 61.

original sterility. This experiment, with one or two others, may be considered as having in some degree failed. Such experiments, however, even where they fail entirely, are not without utility. They often suggest plans which ultimately succeed ; and, at all events, they set questions at rest as to the actual capabilities of the soil and climate.

It was in Caithness that my father first manifested that antipathy to waste lands, which so long characterised his exertions as President of the Board of Agriculture. Among his favourite toasts was, “ May a common become an uncommon spectacle in Caithness.” Though he could not procure a general enclosure bill for the whole kingdom, this wish of his heart was fully gratified at home ; for there is now scarcely a single undivided district in the county.

Besides these improvements in tillage, our agricultural Baronet directed his attention to pasturage, and introduced, upon the hilly part of his estate, that valuable breed, “ the long hill sheep of the east Border ;” to which, as I elsewhere observed, he gave the name of *Cheviot*. Knowing that if he tried the experiment upon a small scale, and trusted to the care of inexperienced Highlanders, the sheep would inevitably perish from mismanagement or neglect, he sent north a flock of five hundred at once, under the care of shepherds from the Borders. As even the native breeds had always hitherto been housed during the winter months among the mountains of Caithness,

his neighbours all expected that his plan would be an utter failure, and that a small remnant only of the flock would survive till spring. To their astonishment, however, and to his own satisfaction, it was ascertained that these southern strangers continued in a thriving state, and that their wool did not deteriorate in the north. So profitable was this experiment, that the estate of Langwell, which he purchased for L.5000, was subsequently sold for L.40,000. To improve the black cattle, which was among the worst breeds in Scotland, he ordered some good specimens of bulls from the isle of Skye, and disposed of them to his neighbours at prime cost.

With the view of introducing manufactures into a remote district where capital was wanting, Sir John raised a subscription among the landed proprietors and middling classes of his neighbourhood, and assisted individuals of approved skill out of manufacturing districts, to establish at Thurso and Wick the branches of industry best adapted to the circumstances of the county. In this subscription he led the way, and his donation trebled that of any other contributor. Several valuable manufactories were thus introduced, although not followed up with sufficient vigour afterwards. My father's usual disinterestedness was manifested on this occasion. Among other establishments originating in these subscriptions, a tannery and a bleachfield were set up. He had large shares in both; but, as Henderson informs us, when the former

manufactory succeeded and the latter failed, “ Sir John, from the most patriotic motives, gave up his shares in the tannery, and took the whole shares of the bleachfield to himself.” \*

In his attempts to raise timber, the difficulties arising from a thin soil, and from exposure to the sea blast, could be only partially surmounted. Sir John, however, established, near the river Thurso, a nursery for trees ; and also planted, in three years, on the mountains bordering on Sutherland, no less than 345,000, which are now in a thriving state.† Experiments on a small scale were made by other proprietors, several of whose mansion-houses are now partially surrounded with plantations, which are rather stunted perhaps in growth, but yet in some degree ornamental.

To remedy the disadvantages of a scattered population, Sir John, on his own property, founded two villages, and commenced a new town at Thurso, on a plan combining ornament with convenience. But his principal effort in this way, was the establishment of a new fishing station near Wick, at a distance from his own estate, under the auspices of the Society for the improvement of the British Fisheries.

\* Henderson's Caithness, p. 248.

† See Henderson's Caithness, Appendix, p. 63. My father's overseers were less zealous in this than in any other improvement which he attempted. They considered trees any where, but in mountainous districts, as a waste of ground, and heedlessly suffered them to be either choked with weeds, or trodden under foot by cattle.

This valuable institution was erected by act of Parliament in 1786. Its capital arose from subscriptions by patriotic individuals, who had no expectation of ever receiving a dividend, but were anxious to extend that important branch of national industry on the northern and western coasts of Scotland. Sir John Sinclair from the first took a great interest in the proceedings of the society, and was indefatigable in obtaining new members and subscribers.

The fishery in Caithness, towards the close of the last century, was very trifling, and is thus described by Pennant, in his "Tour," in 1769 :—" At a little distance from Sinclair's Castle, near Staxigo Creek, is a small herring-fishery, the only one on the coast ; cod and other fish abound there ; but the want of ports on this stormy coast is an obstacle to the establishment of fisheries on this side of the county." To remedy the evils here described, my father adopted, for a succession of years, a variety of energetic measures. So early as 1785, he took a part in the labours of a Parliamentary committee on the British fisheries, and transmitted to that body a valuable paper, published in the appendix to their third Report. In 1787, he prevailed upon a company from Dunbar to re-establish cod-fishing on the coast of Caithness, after it had been neglected for several years. He next furnished certain enterprising individuals with capital to carry on the herring-fishery on the eastern coast.\* In 1789, he submitted to the Directors of the British

\* Henderson's Caithness, Appendix, p. 64.

Fishing Society a memorial, urging the erection of a harbour at Wick, and the establishment of a fishing station in that neighbourhood. The engineers, Mr Rennie and Mr Telford, reported favourably of the plan, which it was considered would be not only useful to the fisheries, but of great national importance ; since, within a short period, not less than thirty vessels had been wrecked upon the coast, chiefly for want of shelter.\* After several years, Sir John, with much difficulty, prevailed upon the society to carry his project into execution. A fishing settlement on a large scale was at last established near Wick, and a harbour erected at the expense of L.12,000, of which, as I have already mentioned, L.8500 was, at his suggestion, granted from the balances of the forfeited estates. The new station was called Pulteney Town, in compliment to Sir William Pulteney, the governor of the society ; and has since become the most valuable of its establishments. Some persons have even gone so far as to say, “ But for Pulteney Town the society would have become bankrupt.” In 1810, when his friend Mr Percival was Prime Minister, Sir John Sinclair, in concert with the Right Honourable G. Rose, persuaded Government to institute a board for the express purpose of superintending and encouraging the fisheries. In consequence of the judicious regulations adopted and enforced by this body, herrings cured by British

\* Henderson's Caithness, p. 365. Also Minutes of the British Fishing Society.

fishermen gradually acquired, and still maintain, the highest reputation in all foreign markets. To this happy result, Sir John further contributed by inducing Ministers to send, at the public expense, Dutch fishermen to Caithness for the instruction of the natives, hitherto unskilful in the art of taking and curing herrings. The result of these various measures is, that, on the coast of Caithness alone, in the year 1829-30, above 13,000 individuals were employed in this department of industry, and above 150,000 barrels of herrings cured.\* The description of Wick by Messrs Anderson, in their "Tour" (1834), forms a striking contrast to that of Penant, in the preceding century. "No sight," say these accomplished travellers, "can be more beautiful than the look-out on a fine summer morning from the seaward cliffs near the town, on the surface of the ocean, bespangled with perhaps from five hundred to a thousand herring-boats, either sailing in lines to or from their stations, or busied hauling in their nets, or rowing round them to guard and watch the indications of their buoys. Large vessels, gli-

\* Caithness includes three entire fishing districts—Wick, Thurso, and Latheron, besides part of Helmsdale. In 1829-30, 6285 persons were employed at Wick ; at Thurso, 1094 ; at Latheron, 1875 ; and at Helmsdale, 1654. To these must be added seamen on board of coasting vessels, who are not included in the returns. In 1828, these last were reckoned by the inspector at 3500. At Wick, there were cured 112,698 barrels ; at Thurso, 1701 ; at Latheron, 18,700 ; and at Helmsdale, 19,857. The whole fishery in that year employed 80,300 persons, and produced 181,654 barrels for exportation.



ding in among this small craft, seem like stately swans surrounded by a flock of lively sea-gulls; and here and there the broad pennon of a revenue cruiser, and the swift light rowing-boats of the preventive service, remind us that no small degree of caution and order is required to be maintained among the numerous little objects dancing on the waves before us, like the motes in a sunbeam."\* The fishery has since been extended with the same success to the neighbouring counties, and is undoubtedly now the most productive in Europe.

By all classes throughout Caithness the utility of my father's exertions was not only appreciated but acknowledged with the warmest gratitude. The freeholders, in 1806, voted him their thanks for having carried through so many measures, which, to use their own words, "laid a solid foundation for the future prosperity of the county." The magistrates of the royal burgh of Wick concurred in a unanimous resolution, that "he was eminently entitled to the thanks of the corporation and inhabitants of the burgh, for his uniform and liberal attention to their interests, and for his obliging conduct on all occasions to every individual connected with the town;" and, in particular, they thanked him for "first turning the attention of the British Fishing Society to the place, and for his zeal in promoting the establishment of the harbour at Pulteney, which had so greatly tended to the prosperity of Wick and its vicinity." In like

\* P. 516.

manner the inhabitants of Thurso, the only other town in the county, at a public meeting in 1800, unanimously voted him an address, acknowledging with gratitude that, "amidst other pursuits of a more extensive tendency, the improvement of his native county had been the peculiar object of his care." They refer to different branches of manufactures which, "through the spirit of industry inspired by his means," had been introduced successfully amongst them. An association, entitled, "The Farmers and Craftsmen of Thurso," formed in 1809, made it their first act, unanimously, to vote Sir John Sinclair an honorary member, and to render him their "warmest thanks, in the name of the community at large, for the services he had rendered them at all times, and more particularly during a recent scarcity."

Nor was it merely by such expressions of good feeling that the proprietors and inhabitants of Caithness rewarded their benefactor. They did more; they cheerfully co-operated with him in his plans of usefulness. They followed his example on their own estates. Their industry and public spirit contrasted nobly with the supineness of their ancestors. New villages, new farms, new harbours, are springing up in every direction. The whole body of inhabitants are in full employment; and it appears, from a comparison of the last but one, with the preceding census, that no county in Great Britain, during the intervening ten years, had increased so rapidly as Caithness in population.

*A General View of the Proportionate increased Rate of Population in the following 86\* Counties or Districts in ENGLAND, WALES, and SCOTLAND; comparing the "Enumeration" of 1821 with that of 1811.† Drawn up (from the Returns made to Parliament) by JAMES CLELAND, Esq. of Glasgow.—June, 1823.*

Counties.	Increase per cent from 1811 to 1821.	Counties.	Increase per cent from 1811 to 1821.
Sutherland †.....	9	Hereford.....10	8
Peebles.....	10	Radnor.....	8
Perth.....	1	Roxburgh.....	8
Forfar.....	2	Clackmannan.....	9
Kincardine.....5	4	Merioneth.....	9
Salop.....	5	Elgin.....15	9
Kinross.....	5	Berks.....	10
Berwick.....	6	Westmoreland.....	10
Nairn.....	7	York, North Riding.....	10
	8		

\* There are properly eighty-seven counties in Great Britain, forty-two in England (calculating each of the three Ridings in Yorkshire as a separate district or county), twelve in Wales, and thirty-three in Scotland; but the counties of Ross and Cromarty are so thoroughly intermingled, that it was found impossible to distinguish the population of each.

† In several counties, the augmentation is to be ascribed to the increased population of the principal towns, by persons flocking into them from the country, or from foreign parts. Thus, the increase of Mid-Lothian, is that of EDINBURGH; of Lanarkshire, that of GLASGOW; of Lancashire, that of MANCHESTER and LIVERPOOL; of Surrey, that of SOUTHWARK; of Middlesex, that of LONDON, &c.

Augmented population in the country districts (an object in every point of view so peculiarly desirable) can hardly take place but in consequence of an increased cultivation of waste lands, which, on that account, ought, as much as possible, to be promoted.

‡ In no district in the kingdom have greater agricultural improvements been made than in Sutherland; but it would appear that its population, between 1811 and 1821, has only increased to the amount of 211 souls. A foundation, however, has been laid for a great increase in *future*, by the building of villages, the establishment of a herring-fishery, and the cultivation of extensive tracts of waste land.

Counties.	Increase per cent from 1811 to 1821.	Counties.	Increase per cent from 1811 to 1821.
Stirling.....	11	Leicester.....	15
Dumbarton.....20	11	Cumberland.....	15
Dumfries.....	11	Carmarthen.....	15
Haddington.....	11	Durham.....	15
Rutland.....	11	Linlithgow.....60	15
Selkirk.....	11	Carnarvon.....	16
Argyle.....25	12	Somerset.....	16
Fife.....	12	Gloucester.....	16
Ross and Cromarty.....	12	Norfolk.....	16
York, East Riding.....	13	Banff.....65	17
Oxford.....	13	Chester.....	17
Buckingham.....30	13	Cornwall.....	17
Cardigan.....	13	Lincoln.....	17
Kent.....	13	Bedford.....	18
Bute.....	13	Denbigh.....70	18
Derby.....	13	Glamorgan.....	18
Devon.....35	13	Warwick.....	18
Essex.....	13	Middlesex.....	19
Northampton.....	13	Cambridge.....	19
Nottingham.....	13	Renfrew.....75	19
Wilts.....	13	Anglesey.....	20
Worcester.....40	13	Pembroke.....	20
Monmouth.....	13	Ayr.....	21
Aberdeen.....	14	Sussex.....	21
Inverness.....	14	York, West Riding, 80	21
Kirkcudbright.....	14	Surrey.....	22
Montgomery.....45	14	Wigton.....	22
Orkney and Shetland...	14	Lancaster.....	25
Hampshire.....	14	Lanark.....	26
Brecon.....	14	Edinburgh.....	28
Dorset.....	14	Caithness*.....86	29
Flint.....50	14		
Huntingdon.....	14		
Northumberland.....	14		
Stafford.....	14		
Suffolk.....	14		
Hertford.....55	15		
		<i>The two latter Counties with Decimals.</i>	
		Edinburgh....28·87,279	
		Caithness.....29·11,738	

† It is perhaps the most extraordinary circumstance recorded in the history of "POLITICAL ECONOMY," that the remotest and most north-

A copy of the annexed table was transmitted by the French Consul in Scotland, the Chevalier Masclet, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Paris, with a long letter explaining the most remarkable results. This intelligent observer dwells with much astonishment on the rapid progress of Caithness. "On se demande," he says, "avec surprise ce qui a pu faire que le comté de Caithness, placé tout à l'extrémité septentrionale de l'Ecosse et en vue des Isles Orcades, ait, d'un recensement à l'autre, surpassé en population les 85 autres comtés de la Grande Bre-

erly county in Great Britain should, on an accurate comparison between the two last "ENUMERATIONS," surpass all the other eighty-five districts of the kingdom in regard to that great criterion of national prosperity (when it is properly regulated and employed),—"INCREASED POPULATION." It is indeed hardly to be credited that such a circumstance could have taken place, if it were not proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, by the most authentic documents. It proves what would have been the prosperous state of the other districts in Great Britain, had the same zeal for improvement, by which this remote county was actuated, been extended with equal judgment over the other districts of the kingdom. This increased population is certainly much owing to the establishment of a valuable herring-fishery, to the erection of villages for carrying it on, and to the number of persons employed in it. But the improvement of agriculture, and the cultivation of waste lands, have gone on progressively with the extension of the fisheries; and hence it is, that notwithstanding the great addition to the population of Caithness, there has been no occasion for importing any grain from other districts at home, and far less from foreign countries.

The formation of roads, accompanied by the establishment of a mail coach to Thurso, have likewise greatly contributed to the prosperity of the county; and what merits particular attention is this, that the whole has been effected, more by means of zeal, industry, and skill, than by the expenditure of great capital. It is proper, also, to observe, that the inhabitants of this county are in general actively and usefully employed; and that "Caithness" has suffered less during the late distresses of agriculture, than almost any district in the kingdom, similarly circumstanced.

tagne.” After enumerating the various measures by which the industry and resources of the county had been called forth, the Chevalier proceeds:—  
“ Toutes ces améliorations sont dues au zèle et au patriotisme éclairé du principal propriétaire de ce comté, à Sir John Sinclair, qui, voulant joindre l'exemple au précept, apres un essai en grand fait sur sa propriété, a réalisé en partie, ce qu'enseignent et promettent ses nombreux écrits, au milieu d'une population qu'il avoit trouvé pauvre et stationnaire sur un sol en friche, et sur une côte orageuse, où l'on n'avait recueilli jusqu'alors que des débris de naufrage.”

The following letters from the President of the Royal Society, from Mr Culley, the most eminent agriculturist and breeder in England, and from Bishop Watson, will be interesting in connexion with the subject now concluded:—

“ Soho Square, April 4, 1802.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ I thank you for your plan for improving your hyperborean property; it is judiciously and ably drawn, and will, I have no doubt, produce effects useful to the public, as well as to individuals. I really think that every member of the Board, who has enlarged ideas, would be obliged to you for the perusal of it. I am sure it has gratified me very much.

“ I am sorry we had not your company yesterday,

as your idea of erecting a statue to the Duke in Russell Square was unanimously adopted, and a subscription entered into by way of beginning, to which, when the thirteenth accedes, as I have no doubt he will, one having left us, it will, I think, amount to 400 guineas.

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ JOSEPH BANKS.”

“ Eastfield, 23d January, 1804.

“ Sir John Sinclair,

“ Please to accept my grateful thanks for transmitting to me the account of the wonderful and extensive improvements carrying on in the remote county of Caithness. It only shows and proves what attention and perseverance will do! I have not forgot that you once said, ‘ that you never undertook any thing but you were determined to go through with it.’

“ It was so far back as the year 1774, I think, or 75, that I visited Caithness, and much pleasure would it give me to again visit that promontory where such beneficial improvements, and upon so very extensive a scale, the distant district considered, are carrying on under your auspices. But I am too old in life to undertake so distant a journey.

“ I am much obliged by your kind enquiries after my health, which, I thank God, is beyond my expectations on the verge of 70. That you may live long to see, and continue to promote, the improvement of

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WALK.



# MEMOIRS

OF THE

## LIFE AND WORKS

OF THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.

BY HIS SON,

THE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, M. A.

PEMB. COLL. OXFORD, F. R. S. E.

AUTHOR OF DISSERTATIONS VINDICATING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ;

AN ESSAY ON CHURCH PATRONAGE, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVII.



## CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

---

### CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Statistical Account of Scotland—Importance of Statistics—Progress of the Science in England—in Spain—in Sweden—in France—in Denmark—in Germany—in Scotland—Difficulties of Sir John's undertaking—His measures for surmounting them—Beneficial Results—Testimonies—The Analysis—Dr Adam Ferguson—Lord Brougham—Translations—Marquess of Lansdowne—Dr Purvis, . . . . .	1
--	---

### CHAPTER II.

Board of Agriculture—Its origin—Motion in the Commons—Sir John Scott's Objections—Lord Chancellor Loughborough—Inaugural Address—Statistical Account of England—Letter to Archbishop Moore—County Reports—George III.—Duke of Clarence—Husbandry of Scotland—General Report of Scotland—Communications to the Board—Agriculture a Science—Patronage of Merit—Suggestions of the Board to Parliament—General Enclosure Bill—Indirect Advantages of the Board—Its Influence Abroad—Removal of its Founder—Public Regret and Indignation—George III.—Decline and Fall of the Board, . . .	45
--	----

### CHAPTER III.

Addington Administration—Duke of Clarence—Bishop Watson—Impeachment of Lord Melville—Fox Administration—Mr Sinclair's Adventure with Napoleon—Codean System—Code of	
---	--

	PAGE
Health — Code of Agriculture — Roxburghe Cause — Indian Cham — Onion — Highland Societies — Spanish Patriots — Sph- erical Case-shot — Bullion Question — Retirement from Public Life,	144

#### CHAPTER IV.

Education of his Family — Removal to Ham Common — Excursions to the Netherlands — Battle of Waterloo — Duke of Wellington — Sergeant Ewart — Emperor Alexander — Final Settlement at Edinburgh — Bullion Question Renewed — Late Sir Robert Peel — Free Trade — Mr Huskisson — Roman Catholic Emancipation — Archbishop Curtis — Bishop Doyle — Duke of Clarence — Parlia- mentary Reform — Earl Grey — Repeal of the Malt Tax — Publi- cation of Correspondence — Goëthe — Code of Political Economy — Code of Religion — Last Visit to Caithness — George Quinton — Religious Life — Last Illness — Death — and Character, .	275
---	-----

# MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Statistical Account of Scotland—Importance of Statistics—Progress of the Science in England—in Spain—in Sweden—in France—in Denmark—in Germany—in Scotland—Difficulties of Sir John's undertaking—His Measures for surmounting them—Beneficial Results—Testimonies—The Analysis—Dr Adam Ferguson—Lord Brougham—Translations—Marquess of Lansdowne—Dr Purvis.

As the foundation at once of political economy and of legislation, an accurate knowledge of the numbers, habits, and condition of the people in every country is obviously necessary. Public statutes, and the recommendations of economists, must be grounded on broad general principles, resulting from a minute and accurate investigation of particular facts. Hence one of the earliest writers on modern economic science,

Sir James Steuart (1767), recommended local surveys as the only safe basis of political and financial regulations. "Every plan for this purpose," says he (that of benefiting a nation), "which does not proceed upon an exact recapitulation of the inhabitants of a country, parish by parish, will prove nothing more than an expedient for walking in the dark." This passage shows that some idea of parochial statistics occurred to the writer, but his hint, which is confined to the amount of population in the districts composing a country, would, if adopted, produce rather a census than a statistical description; and could only constitute a single element in the reasonings of the practical economist. Nor does Sir James suggest the agency to be employed in his limited researches.

These remarks proceed upon the acknowledged truth, that an induction from particulars is the only basis of well-grounded general principles. No doubt where *moral* agency is in question, where the ever-varying determinations of the human will are an element in the enquiry, our inferences are subject to limitations, not necessary to be interposed where the uniform impulses of instinct, or the unvarying laws of inorganic matter, are the subject of investigation. At the same time, although the data afforded by statistics cannot, from their very nature, be so confidently applied in politics, as the data furnished by physiology or chemistry can be applied in natural philoso-

phy, the political economist and legislator neither have, or can have, any other sufficient guide. Even the fundamental maxims of Government, which have less dependence on inductive researches, could not, without induction of some kind, be adapted to local and national peculiarities.

Some degree of statistical investigation, however limited the objects to which it was directed, and however rude and imperfect its results, must have co-existed with the formation of the social system. Indeed, the most natural and most important enquiry to be made by the ruler of a state, must be into the numbers, the condition, and the employments of his subjects. Exemplifications of such researches may be traced back to the earliest epochs in human government; to Moses during the theocracy of the Jews; and to the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Without enlarging upon times so remote, we may instance the compilation of "Domesday Book," by William the Conqueror, containing returns of all the lands in England—the tenure by which they were held—the number of inhabitants—and other circumstances connected with the state of agriculture and pasturage. This great national work, which Hume designates as "the most valuable piece of antiquity possessed by any nation," was followed by the "Rotuli Hundredorum" of Henry III. and Edward I.; by the "Taxatio Ecclesiastica" of Edward I.; and the "Valor Ecclesiasticus" of Henry VIII. But all these accounts

## STATISTICAL ACTIVITY IN SCOTLAND.

were numerous. They related chiefly to the sources of ecclesiastical revenue, and were merely designed to furnish data for setting rates on the clergy, or for ascertaining their property. Camden's "*Britannia*" is rather an antiquarian than a statistical work; rather useful to the historian than to the statesman. Later accounts of different periods have since described more fully all of the fifty-two English counties. Mr. Gough's account of these periodicals is not calculated to induce regret. He describes them as being "full of incorrect pedigrees, futile etymologies, obscure inscriptions, crowds of epigraphs, lists of landowners and such matters, thrown together without method, unimproved by redaction, and delivered in the most uncouth and burlesque style."

Amongst the first statistical enquiry of a national description, in modern times, seems to have been made in Spain, about the middle of the sixteenth century. A list of questions was addressed by Philip the Second to all the prelates and corregidores, comprising fifty-seven heads of enquiry: and although the greater part related to geography, to natural and civil history, to heraldry, agriculture, and mineralogy, several queries were exclusively statistical. No account is preserved of the results of this royal investigation.

The second example in Europe was given by the King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, in 1630. The royal mandate for this purpose was transmitted through the Archbishop of Upsal; and required the clergy,



in their respective parishes, to examine each of the parishioners apart, with reference to certain points of antiquarian research, “which they,” says the mandate, “out of misconception, are apt to conceal;” and farther, “to communicate whatever tends to the praiseworthy improvement of their native country.” The information thus collected was to be deposited in the royal cabinet; and afterwards, in a condensed form, published for the benefit of the kingdom.

The next statistical investigation was made in France about 1698, by direction of Louis XIV., who ordered the local authorities to draw up an account of each province for the instruction of the Duke of Burgundy. Voltaire, whose sagacity perceived at once the vast importance of the information aimed at, remarks of the undertaking, “that had it been well executed, the collection would have been among the most valuable monuments of the age.” He mentions, in terms of commendation, the account of Languedoc, which he had perused in manuscript; but Sir John Sinclair, who had opportunity of examining the document, does not coincide with the historian; he condemns the work as meagre and defective. It is thought that these provincial accounts were never published.

The statistical researches of Denmark were confined to financial tables, printed and partially circulated by the Government, but never committed to the press.

In no part of the continent has the importance of statistics been better understood than in Germany. The vast variety of subjects to which the attention of the statist should be given, is ably and comprehensively enumerated by Baron Boelkefeld in his "*Elements of Universal Erudition*." His work, however, contains speculations and directions only. He did not attempt to put his theory in practice by an actual enquiry into the circumstances of the German empire. Professor Zimmerman's *Political Survey of the Present State of Europe* (1787) is a more practical work; but is on a small scale, considering the wide extent of territory which it embraces.

It was reserved for Scotland to make important progress in such enquiries; and this progress, we may remark, resulted rather from private industry and influence, than from public authority or the exertions of the Government. Researches to a considerable extent were made by Sir Robert Gordon for "*Bleau's Atlas*;" by Sir Robert Sibbald for his "*Atlas Scoticus*;" by Walter Macfarlane of Macfarlane, whose collections are still preserved at Edinburgh in the Advocates' Library; and by Maitland, the historian of London and of Edinburgh. Their exertions, however, did not much enlarge the boundaries of statistical knowledge.

Better success attended the researches of Dr Webster; yet, after nearly twelve years of laborious examination, he could only ascertain the stipends of the

clergy and the population of the kingdom. His work is chiefly valuable as it facilitates a comparison of former with present times, in respect to these particulars. Entertaining a high opinion of the clergy of Scotland, Mr Pennant hoped to prevail upon them to favour the public with exact descriptions of their respective parishes, and his wish in some instances was complied with, but to no great extent. The last attempt of this nature, previous to Sir John Sinclair's work, was made by the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, who obtained accounts of five parishes, and printed them in their Transactions.

From the fact that so much energy and perseverance had produced effects so limited, every attempt to procure parochial accounts, embodying the variety of details now included under the term Statistics, began to be considered visionary and impracticable. Newte, the traveller, derides the hope of those sanguine projectors who tried, by correspondence with the clergy, to draw from them accounts of their respective parishes. "These gentlemen," he says, "do not reflect that there is no individual, however distinguished by genius, rank, or fortune, or even by a happy or rare union of all these advantages, who can possibly be considered by a whole nation as a fit centre for such general co-operation." \*

\* From other quarters my father was assured that his enquiries would receive no countenance or reward from Government. "You are always employed," says Bishop Watson, on

It was under these discouraging circumstances that the Author of the Statistical Account of Scotland commenced his extensive, laborious, and all but impracticable undertaking. He had intended to close his History of the Revenue with a general view of the political circumstances of the country, but had been obliged to abandon the attempt from the scantiness of the existing information. In 1790, being a member of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and being on terms of friendly intimacy with its leaders, he conceived the hope of prevailing upon the clergy to furnish such information regarding their respective parishes as would enable him to publish, in a distinct work, what he had formerly designed for the concluding part of his Financial History. He had no idea of printing, as separate performances, the parochial accounts which he solicited, but intended to digest them into a General Account of the State of Scotland. He found, however, in the first communications of his correspondents, so much ability in composition, and so many curious as well as useful local facts, that he thought it would be unjust towards individual clergymen, if he threw their labours into one mass, instead of giving each contributor, in some degree, the credit of his own performance.

receiving his prospectus, "with honour to yourself and utility to your country. You may be praised, but you will not be promoted to any beneficial situation, for Government is jealous of abilities united with a spirit of independence."—*Letter dated October 4, 1790.*

To preserve as much uniformity as possible in the information to be obtained, he sent a circular-letter to each minister, accompanied by 160 queries, under the four heads of geography and natural history, population, productions, and miscellaneous subjects.\* Having received a number of returns, he printed, in 1791, a volume, containing accounts of four parishes; and having thrown off a thousand extra copies, sent them, with a second circular (by way at once of specimen and excitement), to every parochial clergyman in Scotland. The terms *Statistics*, and *Statistical*, which occurred continually in this volume, were such novelties in the British *nomenclature* of economic science, that Sir John thought it necessary to apologize for their introduction. He explained that he had derived the term from the German, though he employed it in a sense somewhat different from its foreign acceptance. In Germany, a statistical enquiry related to the *political strength* of the country, or to

\* When Sir John sent a copy of these queries to Bishop Watson, his Lordship, who so well knew the duties and habits of the clergy in rural districts, gave him a very discouraging answer. "Your statistical queries," says he, "are all good, but they are too numerous to be answered with precision by a country clergyman." That Dr Blair participated in these sentiments, appears by a passage from a long statistical paper in his own handwriting, transmitted to Sir John. "I am happy," says he, "at there being such a general consent through the country in seconding your patriotic views in obtaining a satisfactory account of Scotland. The clergy seem to have exerted themselves more on this occasion than I expected from them."

questions of state policy, whereas he employed the word to express an enquiry into the state of a country, for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of *happiness* enjoyed by its inhabitants, and the means of its future improvement.\*

The anticipations of Newte and others, as to the difficulty of compiling a statistical account, were realized in all their magnitude and irksomeness by my father. They had only miscalculated as to the probability of finding a man of zeal and perseverance sufficient to support him through the undertaking. Much discouragement arose both from the clergy and from their parishioners. When Sir John's numerous queries reached the ministers to whom they were addressed, a variety of feelings was excited. Many clergymen of industry and public spirit, well acquainted

\* "*Statistick*. This word is not found in any of our Dictionaries. It seems to have been first used by Sir John Sinclair, in his plan for a statement of the trade, population, and productions of every parish in Scotland, with the food, diseases, and longevity of its inhabitants; a plan which reflects the greatest credit on the understanding and benevolence of that gentleman, as it is big with advantages both to the philosopher and the politician."—WALKER'S *Dictionary*.

German statists, and in particular Professor Schlozer, in his *Theorie der Statistik*, insist that a distinction was all along sufficiently kept in view between politics and statistics, by the statistical writers of that country, and that Sir John Sinclair's definition was identical with theirs. I may also here remark, that the Italians may fairly dispute with their German neighbours the appropriation of this term, which occurs in some of their writers soon after the revival of letters.

with the personal character of the author, and assured of the disinterestedness which prompted him to this laborious undertaking, readily and heartily gave their assistance to the work. Various causes, however, prevented others from manifesting similar zeal. Some, not unnaturally, felt considerable jealousy at the boldness of an individual expecting that a whole nation would "consider him" (to use the language of Newte) "a fit centre for general co-operation." Some from the first had condemned the work as impracticable; and having once expressed publicly their opinion, felt unwilling to retract it. Some were indolent, at least with respect to so novel an employment, and were disinclined to trains of thought so foreign to their previous studies. Some, needlessly diffident of their own abilities, dreaded that severity of criticism which they despondingly imagined must await their compositions. Some, being compelled by the prejudices of their people to preach extemporaneously, wanted that facility in writing which, in the sister church, may be expected to result from the practice of composing written sermons. Some were advanced in years; some labouring under infirmities which disqualified them from exertion. Parishes, in some cases, were vacant; and, in others, so large, that the conscientious superintendence of them was sufficient to occupy the time and exhaust the physical energies of the incumbent. Occasionally, three different places of worship, many miles apart, in districts

without roads, and separated by arms of the sea, which for many days or weeks might be impassable, were placed under the same minister.\* Nor was this all; in many cases the salaries of the clergy, especially in the Highlands, were so small, that the General Assembly allowed them to farm a certain amount of land †—a permission in some degree necessary, when we consider the pittance which they received, the rank which they were required to support, and the respectable education which they would be naturally ambitious to give their children. ‡ These secular occupations, rendered imperative by their circumstances, would leave them but little leisure for the numerous and minute enquiries to which the circulars of the agricultural Baronet invited their attention.

Even when the clergyman was willing to supply the information solicited, he had often great difficulty in overcoming the prejudices and misconceptions of his parishioners. Nor was such discouragement a novelty

\* Dr Johnson, in his *Tour to the Hebrides*, has some severe remarks on this paucity of ministers. He speaks of places, where weeks or months might pass without any public exercise of religion; and of skeletons of chapels which stood “faithful witnesses of the triumphs of Reformation.”

† Even in the wealthy agricultural county of Aberdeen a considerable number of the parishes were under a hundred a-year, some as low as L.60, according to their own returns to Sir John.

‡ “The only gentlemen in the islands,” says Dr Johnson, “are the laird, the tacksman, and the minister, who frequently improve their livings by becoming farmers.”—*Tour to the Hebrides*.



in the progress of statistics ; whether the enquirer was a private individual or an agent of the Government, empowered in the latter case to demand, what in the former could only be requested through the influence of personal friendship, urbanity, or public spirit. It is by no means unnatural, under certain political circumstances, to suspect that the details of personal property may be rendered subservient to purposes of taxation. Thus, when the materials of Domesday-book were collecting, not only did the people view the work with suspicion and dislike, as a preliminary to new imposts, but even pious frauds, it is said, were practised by the Royal Commissioners engaged in the task, who underrated in some instances the value of ecclesiastical property, that its owners might, at least in part, be enabled to evade the apprehended impositions. So also, in the case of Sweden, it appears, that much reluctance was anticipated on the part of the people to make the necessary returns ; “out of misconception,” as the expression is in the circular of Gustavus Adolphus. When the clergy, in the case of Scotland, endeavoured to obtain the information required, their parishioners contemplated with jealousy these unofficial investigations. They suspected, although Sir John Sinclair was no agent of Government, although he was one of the greatest friends of retrenchment and economy, and one of the most efficient promoters of the interest of the people, that still the materials he might collect, with a most

disinterested view, would be employed against themselves as the basis of fresh taxes. Tenants also in country parishes disliked a scrutiny into the produce of the soil and value of the stock, as affording dangerous data to landlords for the augmentation of their rents. In these our enlightened times, it may appear surprising that superstition also, in certain cases, retarded the enquiry. \*

\* “ The following verses were sent to Sir John Sinclair by the eccentric, benevolent, and pious minister of Lochcarron, on the west coast of Ross-shire—a man of whom many droll stories are told, and who is most affectionately remembered among his parishioners by the name of “ The Good Mr Lachlan :”—

“ This same statistical account  
Is sent to please Sir John ;  
And if it be not elegant,  
Let critics throw a stone.

“ We have not fine materials,  
And our account is plain ;  
Our purling streams are well enough,  
But we have too much rain.

“ In Humby there’s a harbour fine,  
Where ships their course may steer ;  
Such as are building villages  
Might build a village there.

“ From Castle Strom there is a road,  
Straight down to Kessock ferry ;  
And by this road, the men of Skye  
Do all their whisky carry.

“ Our girls are dressed in cloak and gown,  
And think themselves right bonny ;  
Each comes on Sunday to the kirk  
In hopes to see her Johnny.

I have now to describe the means taken by Sir John Sinclair to surmount these accumulated obstacles. We have already noticed him circulating a specimen volume among the clergy as the first fruits of his labours. This was the harbinger to a long-continued series of efforts. He prevailed upon Principal Robertson the historian, Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff, Principals Hill and Gerard, Dr Blair, Dr Kemp, and other eminent clergymen, to importune their clerical

“ A drover, when the sermon’s done,  
Will ask the price of cows,  
But the good honest Christian  
Will stick to gospel news.

“ We call for tea when we are sick,  
When we want salt we grumble ;  
When drovers’ offers are not brisk,  
It makes our hopes to tumble.

“ The parson has no horse or farm,  
Nor goat, nor watch, nor wife :  
Without an augmentation too,  
He leads a happy life.

“ Now, good Sir John, it was for you  
I gather’d all this news ;  
But you will say, that I forgot  
To count the sheep and cows.

“ Of these we have a number too,  
But then, ’twixt you and I,  
The number they would never tell,  
For fear the beasts should die.”

See an entertaining and intelligent work, entitled “ The School-master.”

friends in the country for reports. He induced the Earl of Leven, his Majesty's Commissioner to the General Assembly, the Duke of Argyle, the Earl of Fife, and other great proprietors in Scotland, to address the different ministers whom they had presented to parishes, or over whom they had influence, urging them to co-operate in the work.

To interest the clergy in the success of the undertaking by the strong motive of natural affection, my father generously assigned all the profits of his publication to a society about that time instituted "for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy." This institution, in 1791, possessed a fund of L.1000, but did not propose making any distribution till their capital should be doubled ; a result which the sale of the Statistical Account was expected to realize. This delay, so painful to all parties, was obviated by the exertions of Sir John Sinclair, who, with great difficulty, prevailed on the directors of the institution to apply for a royal grant in aid of their funds. This application he strenuously recommended to the King's favourable consideration through Mr Secretary Dundas, who, in communicating the intelligence that a grant of L.2000 had been made, declared that this donation was to be considered as a reward to the clergy for their statistical exertions.

The following letters from Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff, the Reverend Dr Hardy, and Mr Secretary

Dundas, together with the vote of thanks from the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy, explain sufficiently this interesting transaction.

*From the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Bart.*

“ Edinburgh, 14th April, 1792.

“ Sir,

“ The charter of incorporation to the Society for the Sons of the Clergy, notwithstanding what I wrote you formerly, by some accident did not get through the public offices till a few days ago.

“ I mentioned your suggestion of the scroll of a petition to Dr Hardy ; but he is at a loss to know how such a petition should be drawn, to whom it should be addressed, and to what funds the application should refer. As you are a better judge of these points than we can be, if you will be so obliging as to drop your ideas to him, it will add greatly to the obligation you have already conferred on us. I have the honour to be, most respectfully, sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

“ H. MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD.”

*From the Reverend Dr Hardy.*

“ Edinburgh, 9th May, 1792.

“ I have delayed answering your letter, inclosing a draft of a petition for aid of the Sons of the Clergy, till

I should have conversed with several members of the society who have taken an active part in its affairs. We all consider the society as very much indebted to you, both on the ground of the statistical enquiries, and of your readiness, on this occasion, to exert yourself for some immediate pecuniary grant to bring its capital into a situation which may authorize a commencement of distributions. All of the gentlemen with whom I have conversed on this point express, however, a reluctance to take so pointed a step as a petition for pecuniary aid in this case, as there is no specific fund in view on which a probable claim might be laid, but only the privy purse, to which our petition could refer. We are afraid that a repulse might expose the society ; and our existence depends on our being able to preserve the full and unmixed approbation of the country."

*From Mr Secretary Dundas.*

" Wimbledon, 18th June, 1792.

" Dear Sir,

" By the letter I have this day wrote to the Lord Provost, in consequence of the petition from the Society of the Sons of the Clergy signed by him, you will see how bountiful the King wishes to be to them. I trust it will have the effect of making them more and more zealous in their statistical researches. Indeed, I confess I felt peculiar pleasure in moving his

Majesty on the subject of the donation for the benefit of their sons, that they had so handsomely stepped forward to aid a public object of this kind.

“ I shall, to-morrow, show to his Majesty the specimen of the Spanish wool improved in Scotland. I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“ HENRY DUNDAS.”

*From the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy.*

“ Edinburgh, May 29, 1792.

“ The Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy unanimously resolved that the thanks of the Society be offered to Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, for the warm interest he has taken in the prosperity of the scheme, and for his active services, which have been directed to the improvement of their funds ; and the society order that an extract of the minute be delivered to Sir Henry Moncrieff, Baronet, and Dr Hardy, that the same may be by them presented to Sir John Sinclair.

“ Extracted from the minutes of the Society, by William Creech, Secretary.”

I ought to add, that the members of this benevolent institution expressed their gratitude to my father not only in their collective, but also in their individual capacity. “ I trust,” says Principal Hill, “ that neither the fathers nor the children will ever forget

how much they owe to your zealous and persevering exertions."

On this royal donation the Baronet grounded his third circular, urging the clergy to proceed immediately with a work which now appealed to their gratitude as well as to their public spirit. It would appear that he often made this motive still more effectual by exertions of private influence, and that in many instances the sons of his statistical correspondents were among the number of those whose success in life he had the gratification of advancing. John Home, the author of "Douglas," shows some jealousy of the influence with my father enjoyed by the reverend contributors. Applying for a commission in the Fencibles in favour of his nephew, he drily observes,—  
"If your companies are not engaged, I shall get as many doctors in divinity as you please to recommend him. Your circular points well to keep up a communication with the clergy who have served you in your Statistical Account, which will long remain the materials of history."

The circular just referred to was followed by a fourth, expressed in still more urgent terms, and in a pleasant vein, threatening defaulters with the substitution of some other historian of the parish, in case its minister continued contumacious.

The next measure of Sir John was to obtain for his work the patronage of the General Assembly of the Church, so that obedience to authority might be



added to the other inducements for compliance with his solicitations. A vote passed unanimously, recommending and urging the ministers “to contribute, with all the expedition in their power, to complete a task of such apparent public utility.” A copy of this vote was transmitted by the Baronet to all his procrastinating correspondents, accompanied by a sixth circular, written for the first time in manuscript, entreating compliance with the recommendation of the supreme ecclesiastical court. After two other circulars, the number of recusants was so much diminished, that on the 25th August, 1794, he was enabled to write his ninth circular with his own hand. After ten additional circulars, proceeding from request to entreaty, from entreaty to remonstrance, and from remonstrance to expostulation, as a last resort, he penned an epistle in *red ink*, facetiously announcing that the laws of Draco were in force against delinquents, who would be proceeded against with Dracoian severity. In all, Sir John’s circulars amounted to twenty-three, besides several transmitted by his political and clerical friends. A venerable Principal, now alive, humorously acknowledged that “nothing but the laws of Draco would have enforced his obedience.”

Notwithstanding all these exertions, as there were several parishes from which no report could be procured, the Baronet had recourse to the singular expedient of employing persons, whom he designated

“Statistical Missionaries,” who personally, at his expense, visited the undescribed parishes, and drew up reports of them. He himself contributed an account of Thurso, his native parish, which is among the most ably written, and in its details perhaps the most copious of the whole compilation.

Among the many disheartening circumstances which impeded the undertaking, may be mentioned the destruction of the fourteenth volume by fire in the premises of the printer ; and, what was more vexatious, the total loss of twelve reports, which caused a necessity for soliciting the contributors to recommence their labours. At last, however, on the 1st January 1798 (a most auspicious day to the indefatigable author), after seven years, seven months, and seven days (as he somewhat minutely calculated) of incessant labour and anxiety, he had the happiness to complete the work in twenty-one thick and closely printed octavo volumes, comprehending the contributions of above nine hundred individuals.

Perhaps a more interesting exhibition of diversified talent was never made than in the original manuscript reports from the multitude of authors, whom public spirit, personal friendship, private influence, gratitude, or importunity, had called almost simultaneously into the field of authorship. Many of the reports showed great natural ability as well as literary acquirement ; and the whole collection did the highest honour to the Church of Scotland. The contri-

butions, however, as might be expected, were of very unequal merit. Some of them betrayed much ignorance, prejudice, and inaccuracy; some were imperfect and jejune; a far greater number tedious and verbose. Lord Hailes, in a letter to Sir John, dated 18th February 1791, warns him not to receive, with implicit confidence, all the statements transmitted to him by his correspondents. "There is much," he says, "to be learned even from your specimen volume, but I suppose that you will *check* the information you receive from the clergy with what you learn elsewhere." Other friends, in whose hands he placed some of the manuscripts for revision, expressed, in strong terms, their disappointment and vexation at the crude and undigested materials submitted to their consideration. "The account of ——" says the Rev. Dr Hardy, "was the strangest paper I have yet met with—a good deal of important information ill expressed, and lying *run-rigg* with a great quantity of nonsense." In the task of giving uniformity and precision to this multifarious series of papers, Sir John Sinclair, and the literary friends employed to assist him, might have justly adopted the saying of an old Scottish jurist, who, having undertaken the task of abridging and condensing some enormous mass of writings, describes, with great satisfaction, how he had "cropped, lopped, pruned, pared, and amputated the huge mass before him into readable dimensions." The sensitiveness of authors is well known, and was

abundantly called forth when the corrected manuscripts were printed. Many of the clergy were loud in their expressions of dissatisfaction. Correction and emendation naturally appeared to involve a charge against the competency of the writers. The parts omitted were judged to be most important, and those supplied to be needless interpolations. On the other hand, there were many clergymen, and in some instances the ablest, who not only took in good part the censorship of their reports, but thanked Sir John for the improvement they had personally derived from the diversified studies to which his numerous queries invited them. He more than once refers to this as amongst the most pleasing circumstances connected with the undertaking.

It is gratifying to record that a work, so honourable to the talents, industry, and patriotism of the clergy, was the means not only of raising the church in the estimation of the public, but of benefiting its most necessitous ministers. The exposure of their privations, in connexion with the evidence of real worth afforded by their productions, elicited the patronage of the Legislature. In addition to the royal grant already mentioned, which operated so beneficially towards their families, laws were passed for regulating the augmentation of their livings, either from the parochial funds, or, where the tithes were exhausted, from a Parliamentary grant in their behalf. By this enactment, it was provided that L.150 per

annum should be the lowest stipend of a clergyman of the Church of Scotland. It may be added, in connexion with the benefits resulting to the clergy from the "Statistical Account," that their labours have supplied statesmen with a fresh argument in favour of ecclesiastical establishments. Pinkerton, the historian, congratulating Sir John Sinclair on the completion of his labours, observes, that he had thus furnished "one of the strongest practicable arguments for the utility of the clerical body."

Another interesting class of men, whose talents have mainly contributed to the moral and intellectual superiority of Scotland, shared in the benefits produced by this great work. The parochial schoolmasters had from various causes been reduced to extreme penury; but measures were now taken to remedy this evil, by an addition to their salaries. I have now before me various letters of thanks for the exertions of my father in their behalf. The schoolmaster of Stewarton, writing in the name of his brethren within the presbytery of Irvine (21st March, 1798), informs Sir John that "salaries in some parishes had been augmented by the heritors (landowners) themselves; and in others by mortifications (endowments), either of land or money, since the publication of the Statistical Account." He expresses at the same time, the determination of his brethren to be guided by the Baronet in "all their exertions to obtain the intervention of Parliament in their

behalf." There is also a letter in the name of a general meeting of the schoolmasters of Scotland, which proves how shamefully this useful body of men had hitherto been neglected. They return thanks to Sir John Sinclair for procuring their exemption from liability to serve in the militia.

Among results connected with the domestic happiness and comfort of the people, may be mentioned the abolition of a grievance technically called *thirlage*, by which farmers were restricted to particular mills in grinding their corn, and subjected, under this strange pretence, to vexatious exactions.\* Not only were they compelled to pay certain charges on the corn actually ground, but even, in some cases, on their whole crop, in consequence of their obligation to have it ground in these mills. This feudal right sometimes cost the farmer a ninth part of his produce. To the removal of this nuisance, may be added the repeal of a duty on coals carried coastwise, which had impeded the progress both of agriculture and of manufactures. Although the tax produced only about L.12,000 a-year, yet its abolition was felt as a great boon by individuals, whose miseries, arising from

\* Lord Hailes, in a letter to my father, says, that the word *thirl* is derived from *thral*, so that *thirlage* means bondage. "The miller in my barony," says George Dempster, M.P., in a letter, dated 1792, "never ground the *thirlage* corn but when there was no *unbound* (voluntary) customers' corn to grind."

the dearness of fuel, were occasionally made public through the reports of the clergy.

It was naturally to be expected that the minute and various knowledge conveyed in the Statistical Account, would contribute to the advancement of *medical* science ; and that valuable inferences might be drawn from the remarks of the clergy, as to the effects of food, clothing, and climate upon longevity and population. Numerous references accordingly have been made to Sir John's work by physicians of talent and celebrity, foreign as well as British. The following letter is from a learned medical writer :—

“ Clifton, near Bristol, 18th February, 1798.

“ Sir,

“ I am at present engaged in a popular medical work on a subject of unquestionable importance ; and I find much to my purpose in that valuable repository which the public owes to you—the Statistical Account of Scotland. I have seen the twentieth volume announced for this winter. Unless it appears soon, it will be too late for my purpose ; and I should be much obliged to you, if you would indulge me with the part already printed, if any part be yet printed.

“ I shall endeavour to put the Scotch clergy in a better way of observing the healthiness of their parishes. Indeed I am much inclined to give up the profits of a summer's practice, for the sake of a medical tour in Scotland ; which country I choose, because

your publication has so much facilitated enquiry. I am, sir, with great regard, your most obedient servant,

“ THOMAS BEDDOES.

“ P.S.—If you can favour me with any sheets, please to direct them as follows.”

Among the benefits resulting to the public from the Statistical Account of Scotland, was the encouragement it afforded generally to similar undertakings. Influenced by this example, the Right Honourable Charles Abbot (afterwards Lord Colchester) proposed a general census of Great Britain. Writing to Sir John, he says, “ Your success in the completion of a similar enquiry, suggested to me the idea of a general census ; and I rely much on your aid in carrying the measure through.” This important national work has since been extended to Ireland ; and thus the real state of the empire, in respect to the number and capabilities of its inhabitants, has for the first time been demonstrated, and sure data supplied for the regulation of our foreign and domestic policy.\*

\* It is recorded by Sir John Malcolm, in his Memoir of Central India, that, on being appointed to the command of that district in 1818, one of his first measures was to have a census taken of the population of the several provinces subject to Holkar, Scindia, &c. The utility of this statistical information was seen at once by Tantia Jogh, the prime Minister of Holkar, who declared that it imparted to him a knowledge which he



Besides the general census, other valuable works were suggested by the Statitiscal Account ; for example, Cesar Moreau's " Statistical Works on France ;" Dr Seybert's extensive enquiries as to the " United States of America ;" Dr Cleland's incomparable volume on " Glasgow ;" Marshall's elaborate " Statistics of the British Empire ;" the " County Surveys of Ireland," drawn up for the Dublin Society ; and the " Parochial Accounts" of that kingdom, communicated to Mr Shaw Mason. The able and persevering statist last mentioned, reprinted, at the commencement of his researches, and circulated widely among the Irish clergy, two specimen reports, one of which was Sir John's account of Thurso.\*

could only describe by saying, that " he felt like a man who had been couched for a cataract in the eye ;" it seemed to him as " light after darkness."

\* In the preface to his work, Mr Shaw Mason says, " Among the earliest and most valuable of his correspondents, the author is proud to mention the name of Sir John Sinclair, whose previous work excited him to this undertaking, and was the model which, in its progress, he has imitated. At a time when war was desolating the whole civilised world, this true patriot devoted himself to the improvement of the agricultural resources of Great Britain ; and, by his unremitting exertions, turned the public mind so strongly towards this great national object, devised or discovered so many means of working to advantage this never-failing mine of public wealth, that he may be considered as mainly contributing towards the supply of the enormous sums necessary for carrying to a successful termination the vital conflict in which the British Empire was then engaged. He has indeed received his reward—he has completed his struc-

To the above list, I may add another publication still more intimately connected with my present subject, namely, a “ New Statistical Account of Scotland ;” or, as I would more correctly term it, a new edition of *the* Statistical Account, now in progress under the management of the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy. To this benevolent institution, as I have already mentioned, my father presented the copy-right of his work. The new undertaking appears to be ably conducted, and to deserve the patronage of the public. In its arrangements and details, it does not differ materially from the old, a circumstance which proves that experience has suggested few improvements in the plan originally devised by Sir John Sinclair.

Testimonies to the value of the Statistical Account as a standard work of reference for the statesman and economist, to the talents, and zeal, and perseverance of the author, and to the industry, intelligence, and public spirit of his contributors, have been given by the highest authorities, both at home and abroad. Letters and documents, in the warmest terms of eulogy, are extant, in such profusion, from men well known in politics and in literature, that I feel embarrassed by the difficulty of selection. Andrews, the continuator of Henry’s History of Great Britain,

ture—he has lived to witness the increase of his reputation, and to receive the assurance that posterity will do him justice.”

speaking of his historical researches, says, "If any one can aid me, it must be the author of the Statistical Account of Scotland—a book which I have perused with great pleasure and astonishment; I may say envy, since the southern part of the island ought to blush at having never produced a similar work." \* That eminent jurist, Jeremy Bentham, uses language not less pointed and eulogistic:—"That single work," says he, "is more valuable than an ordinary library." Dr Guthrie, the geographer, says, "Your Statistical Account, in my opinion, is the most perfect which has ever yet appeared; and will probably serve as a model to other countries." Count Hauterive pronounced Scotland the country "in which the spirit of observation was carried nearest to perfection." He adds, "The statistical information which it (the Account of Scotland) presents, is the most recent and the most complete that I have met with; and therefore most proper to give a just idea of the researches hitherto made, and of the degree of perfection to which they have been carried in our time." Count Hertzberg, formerly Prime Minister of Prussia, de-

\* Andrews's character of the finished work reminds me of the anticipations of Dr Henry, whose plan he adopted, and whose work he continued. In a letter to my father at the commencement of the undertaking, this eminent writer had observed to him, that his "labours might be of great utility, greater, perhaps, than could be foreseen;" and remarked, "that he should be assisted by every Scotsman who had it in his power."

clared the plan to be particularly well formed ; adding, “ If I were again at the head of the Prussian cabinet, I would carry it into execution here.” The founder of the American Republic, General Washington, contemplated the work with warm sympathy, as an example, which, if followed in other countries, would contribute essentially to the welfare of the human species. “ I cannot,” says he, “ but express myself highly pleased with the undertaking in which you are engaged, and give my best wishes for its success. I am fully persuaded, that when enlightened men will take the trouble to examine so minutely into the state of society, as your enquiries seem to go, it must result in greatly ameliorating the condition of the people, promoting the interests of civil society, and the happiness of mankind at large. These are objects truly worthy the attention of a great mind ; and every friend to the human race must readily lend his aid towards their accomplishment.” I conclude with one more testimony, that of the celebrated writer on the Principles of Population :—“ The valuable accounts,” says Mr Malthus, “ which the author of the Statistical Account of Scotland has collected in that part of the island, do him the highest honour ; and will ever remain an extraordinary monument of the learning, good sense, and general information of the clergy of the Church of Scotland. That work, with a few subordinate improvements, and accurate and complete registers for the last 150 years (which,

however, no diligence could have effected), would have been inestimable ; and would have exhibited a better picture of the internal state of a country, than has yet been presented to the world." \*

The biographer of Sir John Sinclair is bound to mention, that, with his usual disregard for private interests when objects of public utility were to be attained, the Baronet not merely gave the whole profits of his work, as has been stated, to the sons of the clergy, but incurred a very considerable expense in setting up and maintaining the vast machinery required for the prosecution and completion of his voluminous undertaking.

I have already mentioned, that, when my father originally projected his statistical enquiries, he intended merely to give a general digest or summary of the materials collected ; but that the excellence of the first reports transmitted to him by the clergy induced him to adopt the plan of parochial accounts. He did not, however, abandon the design of drawing up a general digest, but sketched a plan which he submitted for examination to a number of his friends. Among others, he consulted the historian of the Roman Republic—Dr Adam Ferguson. The answer of that venerable author, then in his 75th year, expresses views and feelings which the writer considered liberal ; but which many of his countrymen would condemn as anti-national.

\* Malthus's Essays, 3d Edition, p. 13, Note.

“ Hallyards, near Peebles, 29th June, 1798.

“ My dear sir,

“ I now return, as you desire, the sketch, and will mention what occurs to me in the way of remark. Having already accomplished so much, it is natural for you to be sanguine in what you further propose. The sketch, accordingly, appears to me too vast for any powers but your own ; but far be it from me, in word or thought, to discourage so laudable a design. Part of the Statistical Account might be concentrated in tables ; and, for the use of those who must still wish to consult the original reports, a full index to the whole work will be extremely gratifying and useful. With respect to the projected analysis, it appears to me that the titles of the chapters and sections seem to place Scotland too much on the footing of a separate and independent state ; as, in the terms, “ Political State of Scotland,” and “ Its system of Government,” “ Public Income and Expenditure,” “ Military State,” “ Naval State,” &c. &c. I do not apprehend that this language proceeds from any passion for local distinction in your mind ; but it may fall in with such passion, or nurture it in others. I would therefore incline to have the whole matter treated merely as an account of the present state of certain northern counties or parishes of Great Britain ; thus separately obtained, in consequence of particular circumstances relating to the clergy, and the author’s

more immediate connection with the districts in question ; to which might be added, a hope that the same thing may be extended gradually southwards as proper persons may be disposed to undertake the collection.

“ Scotland once had its separate patriots, and I am not sure but William Wallace was the greatest man that ever this island produced ; but if he were now alive, and did not feel for Great Britain precisely as in his own time he did for Scotland, I should think but meanly of his patriotism.

“ The whole of the original reports are not yet come to my hands. When I was in Edinburgh, I received the volumes regularly as they came out, up to the thirteenth, inclusive. I shall now, without delay, desire the remaining volumes to be sent to me by the bookseller with whom I commonly deal. I have the honour to be, my dear sir, your most obedient servant,  
ADAM FERGUSON.”

Meanwhile, however, other objects intervened. My father's whole time was employed. Years passed away, and perhaps the digest never would have been attempted, but for a circumstance which he thus describes in his private memoranda :—“ At Dunrobin Castle,” (the seat of the Duke of Sutherland), “ on Thursday 28th August, 1823, I sat down to read Dr Currie's edition of the works of Robert Burns, printed in 1800. In a note, appended to the first volume, I

found the following paragraph on the expenses of education in Scotland. ‘ On this point accurate information may soon be expected from Sir John Sinclair’s Analysis of his Statistics, which will complete the immortal monument he has reared to his patriotism.’ I read this paragraph, written twenty-three years ago, with astonishment and shame; and I resolved that nothing should interfere with the execution of that Analysis, which I had promised so long before to the public.”

In the preparation of this summary, the author carefully perused the whole twenty-one Statistical volumes which he had already published, and arranged all the most important facts and observations contained in them, under fourteen heads. These he afterwards condensed into one volume, to which he added a history of Scotland, as a preface, and two appendices, relating to a variety of questions, literary, political, and ecclesiastical.

While the work was in the press, Sir John sent the sheets as they were thrown off, to several intelligent friends for their remarks. The following good-humoured strictures on the prospectus and introduction, by the Rev. Dr Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh, may amuse the reader :—

“ 29, Melville Street, 24th May, 1824.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have read your prospectus, but really I have



no amendments of any consequence to suggest. It appears to me to be skilfully drawn up, and to promise well for the Analysis.

“ In the list of metaphysicians, I should certainly not omit the late Dr Thomas Brown, who was fully more original than any of his predecessors, and had perhaps the acutest intellect that ever presided in the chair of moral philosophy.

“ Why leave out the name of Campbell from the list of poets? \* He is much superior to Scott in depth of feeling, and in the other great attributes of the poetic character.

“ I am not sure that my friend Dr Chalmers should be described as a *meteor*. I hope that he is rather a *luminary*, as dazzling, I confess, but more permanent and useful, I hope, than a meteor.

“ I might offer a few remarks more of the same sort, but I fear you may think these trifling, and therefore I return you the prospectus, with my best thanks for your attention, and am,

“ Dear sir,

“ Your faithful servant,

“ ANDREW THOMSON.”

On forwarding the chapters on education and the poor to Mr Brougham, he received from him two

\* This was of course a mere oversight. No man was prouder of having Campbell for his fellow-countryman than Sir John. —See his *History of the Highland Society of London*.

letters characteristic of the activity and perseverance with which that philosophical politician carried on his miscellaneous pursuits.

“ Brougham, 1st Nov. 1824.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I have been so much occupied, and interrupted too, since I came home from the Circuit, that I have never had time to commit to paper any remarks or suggestions upon the two very interesting and valuable digests of the poor and education parts of the Statistical Account, and to-morrow I leave this for London. But I propose occupying myself upon the education during the journey; and I shall send the sheets under separate covers, soon after my arrival.

“ You ask after my place of birth and relationship to Dr Robertson. I was born in St Andrew's Square, Edinburgh, and Dr Robertson was my mother's uncle. Believe me ever, with great esteem, your obliged and faithful servant,

H. BROUGHAM.”

“ My dear Sir,

“ I enclose a few notes upon the education portion of your digest. I have not returned the printed sheets, being very desirous of keeping them for my own use, as they contain much valuable matter, and many references; but I shall send them if you have

any objection to my retaining them. You may rely on their never getting out of my hands. Believe me most truly yours,  
H. BROUGHAM.

“ Hill Street, Berkley Square, Nov. 7, 1824.”

This compendium was translated into French, under the patronage of M. Villele, Secretary of State for Finance, by M. Cordier, Principal Engineer of Roads and Bridges in the department of le Nord. M. Cordier's attention probably had been first directed to the work by a bulletin of the Geographical Society of Paris, which announced Sir John's intention to the public in France, and described the great interest with which the Society looked forward to its completion.\*

The following is M. Cordier's announcement of his performance :—

“ Sir,

“ I find, in translating your excellent work, an attraction which is always increasing, both from the importance of its contents, and from the talents of its author, whose justly acquired reputation is spread all over Europe. Pray send me the continuation, so that the French copy may be published soon after the Scotch one. I may venture to assure you that your

\* Bulletin de la Société de Géographie. Par M. de la Roquette Rédacteur, Nos. xxi and xxii. Ann. 1825.

book will have a great run in a country like this, where the subjects, which you treat with so much ability, are more and more attended to.

I read with the greatest interest the transactions of the society in Scotland you were so good as to send me, and which contain the most complete information upon the most important subjects.

It would give me great pleasure to pay a visit this year to your delightful country, the annals of which are connected with those of France, and with the history of all discoveries; and to visit one of the literary characters who does most honour to his country and to humanity, and with whom I feel the greatest desire to become acquainted.

“ I remain, with the greatest respect and gratitude,  
sir, your obedient and humble servant,

“ J. CORDIER.”

A German version, also, of the Analysis was published, but has never happened to come under my notice.

I close this history of the Statistical Account of Scotland with three documents—one a letter from the first Marquess of Lansdowne; the next a letter from Dr Gillies the historian, and the third an extract from Dr Purvis' work on the principles of population, containing a well-drawn comparison between economical speculation and statistical researches, with reference to their utility.

“ Bowood Park, 23d July, 1798.

“ Dear Sir,

“ The long continuance of this bad weather has prevented my gaining all the benefit I usually do by my way of life here, and has made me a very bad correspondent to all my friends, otherwise I certainly should not have been so to Sir John Sinclair; but it has given me an opportunity of seeing Mr Debary, who has been mostly with his father since he came into the country, and showing him the papers you did me the honour to send me. We are both decided in preferring the more philosophical arrangement. You make too much account of my judgment, especially in these extraordinary times when the best judgments go for nothing; but it appears to me, that the longer this strange state of things continues, the more certain the change; but which ever side gets the better, necessity, independent of all motives of morality, wisdom, and general policy, will render a new order of things indispensable; which can never produce the good intended, if it does not proceed upon those data, the collection of which seems to occupy the most enlightened part of the continent, but which you are the only person who has made any attempt worth mentioning to introduce with us. I earnestly hope that for your own credit, and the public good, you will not give up so honourable a pursuit; sooner or later it cannot fail of being taken up by Government. I am only in pain for the poor Board of

Agriculture, which, I am afraid, will share the fate of most public institutions, as soon as they are out of the care of the first institutor.

“ I am surprised that an universal register has never been brought forward, particularly in these scraping times, as it appears to me some revenue might be got from it without much dissatisfaction, and a great deal of knowledge acquired.

“ Henry and Mrs Debary I should do great injustice to, if I did not bear witness to the grateful sense they must ever retain of the kindness they experienced in Scotland.

“ Whenever you have any commands in this country, I hope you will honour me with them, and that you will believe me, with real esteem, dear sir, your faithful humble servant,

“ LANSDOWNE.

“ P.S.—When I have the pleasure of hearing from you again, will you have the goodness to tell me where I can find an account of the institution of schoolmasters in Scotland. I am curious to see what plan Government will adopt for the interior of Ireland, when these troubles are over.”

*From Dr Gillies to Sir John Sinclair.*

“ I have read with much pleasure the sketch of your Introduction, herewith returned ; and most earnestly hope and trust that you will have health and

leisure to undertake and bring to a conclusion the great work to which it is a prelude, and for the execution of which, in the best manner, no man in the kingdom is so well qualified as yourself. A performance of that kind, both in its own value, and the example which it sets to the world, soars above transient concerns and temporary employments, and is truly worthy of a *consul non unius anni*. Your complete analysis of the subject is what gives me particular delight, because in such complex matters as political economy, partial views, and the undue amplification of particular parts, are continually hurrying mankind into the greatest practical errors.

“ There are dark oblivious ages in the history of the world, during which the human mind remains buried in torpid inactivity. There are other periods when the vivid powers of men awaken from their lethargy, and, as if refreshed after a long and undisturbed repose, exert themselves with redoubled energy. The times in which we live belong to the latter description, but that they do so is owing to the generous and well-directed exertions of enlightened and patriotic individuals.

“ *Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,  
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.*”

The following is the passage above referred to from the pages of Dr Purvis.\*

\* Principles of Population and Production investigated by George Purvis, L.L.D. 8vo. 1818. P. 385.

“ Quesnay, Hume, Sir James Steuart, Adam Smith, Malthus, our bullionists, and many others of name, have lent their influence, more or less, to turn a plain science connected with clear everyday facts and causes, into an unintelligible medley of imaginary or contradictory causes, principles, and results, occult qualities, and every species of fancying and dreaming. The whole of this mysterious machinery of imagination and whim must, therefore, be swept away before this science can be really intelligible and of practicable use to men.

“ Fortunately, on the other hand, matter-of-fact statisticians have, during the same period, stood forward, and most essentially assisted the student and sober enquirer by procuring for them such a variety and amount of facts in all the branches of this science as perhaps were never laid before the student of any other science. At the head of these illustrious benefactors to statistics stands Sir John Sinclair, to whom that science and the cultivators of Britain, indeed of Europe, and consequently Europe itself, are so highly indebted. It is no small praise to these statisticians to say that they have done as much to advance the real progress of the science, as our theorists of highest name to retard it.”



## CHAPTER II.

**Board of Agriculture—Its origin—Motion in the Commons—Sir John Scott's Objections—Lord Chancellor Loughborough—Inaugural Address—Statistical Account of England—Letter to Archbishop Moore—County Reports—George III.—Duke of Clarence—Husbandry of Scotland—General Report of Scotland—Communications to the Board—Agriculture a Science—Patronage of Merit—Suggestions of the Board to Parliament—General Enclosure Bill—Indirect Advantages of the Board—Its Influence Abroad—Removal of its Founder—Public Regret and Indignation—George III.—Decline and Fall of the Board.**

IN a country where a Board of Trade had existed for near a century, an intelligent observer of its operations and success would naturally conclude, that an establishment on a similar footing, and composed of similar materials, might be usefully applied to other departments of national industry. Even though Hartlib and Lord Kames had never thought of an institution for the encouragement of Agriculture, we might have taken for granted that the idea had occurred to thousands. Priority of statement, where an idea is obvious, can add but little to the reputation of the projector. Sir John Sinclair probably was not aware that the measure which he proposed had ever been before alluded to by any other individual; but the circumstance on which his merit in this case

depends, is, that he had the energy and perseverance to carry into effect what others passively contemplated or hopelessly desired.

Various considerations combined to make the establishment of such a Board an object of his patriotic ambition ; agricultural observations during his tours abroad, information elicited by his statistical enquiries, discussions on the Corn Bill in 1791, and the success of the British Wool Society. In collecting materials for a pamphlet which he entitled, "An Address to the Landed Interest on the Corn Bill," he had been deeply impressed by the fact, that while we were alleged to be dependent on foreign countries for food, there existed in England alone twelve millions of acres almost in a state of nature ; and that many statesmen were looking helplessly for subsistence to other countries, while they overlooked the abundant capabilities of their own. In this tract, he mentions having gone with other members of Parliament to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the view of urging their objections to the proposed Corn Bill, which, without amendment, they conceived unfavourable to British Agriculture. At this interview Sir John explained how small a quantity of additional cultivation would have provided the whole amount of corn imported during the eighteen years preceding 1789. Mr Pitt listened with pleasure, and even with surprise, to the demonstration of a point so important to the safety and independence of the king-

dom. The fact that 15,000 acres would supply the deficiencies of the wheat crop, gave him peculiar satisfaction, which, to do him justice, he was not backward in declaring.\*

The Baronet was likewise encouraged, by his experience as chairman of the British Wool Society, to hope that a public institution, devoted to Agriculture generally, might lead to results incomparably more valuable. He had seen an association, supported only by private subscription, effecting important changes in the existing system of pastoral economy; but he conceived that public aid and patronage were required to make the exertions of individuals permanent and successful. In the appendix to a report of that Society, he thus expresses himself:—"But unless this object is thought worthy of public attention and encouragement; unless a *Board of Agriculture is constituted* for the sole purpose of superintending the improvement of the sheep and wool of the country, and other objects connected either with the cultivation or with the pasturage of the soil, the exertions of any private society must soon slacken, and its labours become useless and inefficient; whereas, under the protection of the government of the country, and the superintendence of such a Board, properly constituted, (more especially if formed of persons who *gratuitously* devoted their services to promote such valuable and truly national interests), every field would soon be cultiva-

\* See pages 8 and 18.

ted to the best advantage, and every species of stock would soon be brought to its greatest perfection.”

From the period of making this suggestion, Sir John Sinclair laboured strenuously to carry it into effect. His prospect of success, however, was much diminished by the circumstance that he was at that time in Opposition, and had therefore little prospect of Ministerial support. He communicated his views to the Premier through Mr Secretary Dundas, from whom he learnt, with much regret and dissatisfaction, that Mr Pitt refused to countenance the project. It has already been recorded, that afterwards the Minister felt so sensibly the importance of my father's services in the affair of the Exchequer Bill Commission as to waive his objections. “The plan,” says Arthur Young, in a lecture delivered before the Board (1807), “would not probably have been attempted,

\* A similar view was taken by the intelligent author of the article “Agriculture,” in Rees's Cyclopedia. After noticing the useful works of Young, Marshall, Anderson, and Bakewell, as also the occasional patronage which husbandry had received from patriots of eminence, he observes, “But neither the distinguished example of the sovereign, the endeavours of provincial societies, nor the exertions of private individuals, with whatever zeal or attention they may be directed, are probably sufficient to extend the knowledge of husbandry to that degree which is necessary for its complete and radical improvement. This could only be fully accomplished by the powerful influence, and expensive exertions of a national establishment instituted for the purpose. Such an institution has at last been brought forward and established by the intelligent and persevering efforts of Sir John Sinclair, to the honour of the country, the age, and the individual who suggested it.”

perhaps in our days, had it not fortunately occurred to an individual whom the Minister at the time was desirous of obliging, and who, in return for his services in contributing to the restoration of the commercial credit of the country (when the Exchequer Bills for that purpose were originally issued) requested the concurrence and support of that Minister to the establishment of a Board of Agriculture.” \*

Anxious to carry his point on any terms consistent with the efficiency of the institution, and finding that one of Mr Pitt’s objections was grounded on the probable expense of the undertaking, the Baronet reduced his first estimate of L.10,500 a-year to L.5500, and even so low as L.2500. The sum finally agreed upon by the Minister was L.3000.

The method adopted by Sir John was, to move in the House of Commons for an Address to the Crown, recommending the establishment of the Board, and promising to make good the expense. When Mr Pitt, previous to this motion, proposed in the Cabinet that Ministers should support it, the only individual who concurred with him was Mr Secretary Dundas. All the others, and in particular Lord Hawkesbury, afterwards Earl of Liverpool, were against it. The influence, however, of the Premier and the Secretary prevailed.

To prepare the House for his intended proposal,

\* Lecture, p. 2. London : Philips.

the mover distributed among the members a printed outline of his plan, with a statement of its probable advantages. To conciliate opponents, he suggested that, by way of experiment, the Board should be established for five years, and that its continuance after that period should be contingent on its ascertained usefulness.

The Baronet made his intended motion on the 15th of May 1793. The objections which he anticipated were, that the proposed Board would be useless, dictatorial, and expensive. To the first objection he replied, that provincial societies for the same purpose confessedly exerted a beneficial influence in particular districts, and that a national institution would exert a similar influence, not only with greater energy, but over the whole kingdom. In answer to the second, he declared that nothing could be farther from his intention than to dictate how the farmer was to cultivate his lands or improve his stock. The object was simply to collect information on these points ; to print and circulate that information when collected ; to encourage a spirit of experiment ; and to reward with public countenance, and perhaps with public aid, such agriculturists as showed a good example of rural industry to their neighbours. As to expense, he compared the smallness of the sum required, with the magnitude of the results to be expected. He pointed out the number of acres throughout Great Britain, which, with proper encouragement, might be

brought into cultivation, or rendered more productive. He expatiated on the advantages which would result from improved breeds of farm-stock, from improved instruments of husbandry, from the general adoption of useful practices peculiar to certain districts, and also from the introduction of foreign discoveries in agriculture into our own country. He concluded by moving, that "an humble address be presented to the King, entreating that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the advantages which might be derived by the public from the establishment of a Board of Agriculture and internal improvement." Lord Sheffield, an able and experienced agriculturist, seconded the motion, which was supported by Sir William Dolben, Mr Wilberforce, Mr Dundas, and Mr Pitt. On a suggestion of Mr Hussey, that more time and a fuller House were required for the investigation of the subject, the debate was adjourned till the 16th.

On that day Sir John renewed his motion, which was seconded by Mr Buxton, the champion of negro emancipation. Mr Hussey, now formally opposed the plan. He objected to the expense, and insisted that the efficiency of private associations for the same purpose superseded the necessity of a public Board. He was supported by Mr Sheridan, who, after indulging in some characteristic jocularities, proposed, as an amendment, that the Board should be established, provided that no expense whatever attending the

same should fall upon the public. Other members of Opposition treated the subject with more gravity. Mr Fox alleged that the whole measure was a mere *job*, and was likely to be converted into an instrument of ministerial patronage. After some few remarks from Mr Pitt in favour of the motion, and by Mr Grey (now Earl Grey) against it, Mr Sheridan's amendment was negatived, and the House then divided on the original motion, when there appeared, ayes 101, noes 26.\*

My father now conceived that all his difficulties were at an end ; but some farther delays occurred on the part of the Attorney-General, Sir John Scott, (afterwards Earl of Eldon), and the Solicitor-General, Sir John Mitford (afterwards Lord Redesdale), who were at a loss to determine on what footing the new institution could be legally placed. The following letter of the former explains the doubts, and illustrates the characteristic caution and sagacity of that great legal authority.

“ Dear sir,

“ When I saw Mr Pitt yesterday, after he had read the address of the Commons, his final opinion and direction was, that if the project was to proceed now, you must be incorporated in the ordinary man-

\* Mr Sheridan and several of the minority afterwards candidly acknowledged the utility of the institution, and wished to see the Board supported in such a manner as would ensure its usefulness and respectability.



ner, and the sense of Parliament must be taken upon granting to you the L.3000 a-year for a limited time, as a distinct measure.

“ The Solicitor-General and I have settled the enclosed draught, therefore, in the ordinary manner. We are at a loss how to make you a corporation as a board. The address of the Commons has proceeded upon the idea that his Majesty could give some legal character to a board as a board, though not constituted to do the office of some great state officer whose office is vacant, or to execute some duty incident to the character of king, to execute as such. We do not immediately perceive what duty of his Majesty he can delegate the execution of to a Board of Agriculture. If you are to be a corporation, and not a board, you must be content with such style as belongs to a corporation. It appears to us that a board subsists upon principles of a different kind from those upon which a corporation subsists. If you are to be a board, you should act by a commission, which would not incorporate you, or give you the powers and faculties which such a charter as this gives you. If you choose to give up these powers and faculties, and to be a board by commission, we incline to think it has been too hastily taken for granted that the Crown has a power to institute by commission, boards, the objects of whose functions do not appear to be in any manner connected with the legal functions of the Crown.

“ When you have settled your mind upon this sub-

ject, the draught must be sent to Mr Grubb's office.  
Yours, with great respect, J. SCOTT."

The difficulties suggested in this letter were eventually overcome, and a charter was drawn up, with the concurrence of the Attorney and Solicitor-General, instituting the Board, and declaring it to be "for ever thereafter a body politic and corporate." By this instrument Sir John Sinclair was appointed President till the 25th of March following, when a formal election to the chair was appointed to take place. The *ex-officio* members consisted of the great Officers of State, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of London and Durham, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the President of the Royal Society, the Surveyor-General of Woods and Forests, and the Surveyor of Crown Lands. The ordinary members were the Dukes of Grafton, Bedford, and Buccleuch; the Marquess of Bath; the Earls of Winchelsea, Hopetoun, Fitzwilliam, Egremont, Lonsdale, Moira, and Carysfort; the Bishop of Llandaff; Lords Hawke, Clive, and Sheffield; besides the following commoners:—Sir Charles Morgan, Bart.; Messrs Wyndham, Marsham, Pulteney, Coke, Powys, Duncombe, Loveden, Somerville, Barclay, Smith, Sumner, Conyers, Willoughby, and Geary. Sir John Call was appointed Treasurer, and Mr Arthur Young, Secretary.

Conceiving that no further obstacles could now

possibly arise, my father ventured to appoint a meeting of the members for a certain day, at his house in Whitehall, when unexpectedly, and to his great mortification, Lord Loughborough, then Chancellor, made a punctilious scruple about affixing the Great Seal to the charter. In the midst of preparations for the expected meeting, the zeal and promptitude of the President were met by the following announcement.\*

“ Tunbridge Wells, 23d August, 10 p.m. 1793.

“ Sir,

“ I received, on the 21st, your letter, informing me ‘ that the difficulties attending the establishment of a Board of Agriculture were so nearly surmounted, that it rests entirely with the Great Seal, the *forms* of which, you trusted, would be gone through so quickly, that you had ventured to request the attendance of the members of the Board on Thursday (the 22d); and this evening, about nine o’clock, I have received the instrument itself, with your letter, desiring the Great Seal to be affixed to it, as several gentlemen had come to town to attend the meeting to-morrow.’

“ During my long stay in town, which I left only last Saturday, no draught of this instrument was ever

\* Throughout this Chapter, where the term *President* occurs, I always mean Sir John Sinclair, unless where the contrary is specified.

communicated to me ; and the first inspection I have had of it, in its present form, is about an hour ago. It must indeed be supposed, that to affix the Great Seal is a mere form, if it is to be gone through so quickly; but, knowing that it is a very sacred duty to attend, with the most exact care, to every instrument of an unusual nature, and even upon the hasty perusal of this instrument entertaining considerable doubt as to the legality of some of its parts, I should stand highly responsible if I were to pass it on so slight a consideration as has been prescribed to me.

“ With the disposition I have to think favourably of the institution, I should be very ready to abridge all ceremony, and in my wish to accommodate the gentlemen who have been requested to attend to-morrow, I should have overlooked the mere irregularity of the proceeding in not communicating the warrant to me ; but the frame of the instrument itself is such, that I hold it necessary to be informed of the grounds upon which the Attorney and Solicitor-General have proceeded, before these letters-patent pass the Great Seal. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

“ LOUGHBOROUGH.”

The surprise of my father at this angry demur was the greater, since he had received, not long before, from the same high quarter, an actual acknowledgment of having been put in possession of the draught in question, and of having examined it with almost

unqualified approbation. Evidently the Chancellor must have forgotten the substance of his former communication, which was as follows :—

“ The Lord Chancellor presents his compliments to Sir John Sinclair, and returns him many thanks for his polite attention in sending him the draught of the proposed commission for the Board of Agriculture. He thinks, with a very few alterations, it will do perfectly well ; and will take the earliest opportunity of consulting the Attorney-General on the subject.

“ Bedford Square, Monday evening.”

At the first meeting of the Board, Sir John Sinclair pronounced an address, corresponding in character with those delivered to the Royal Society and to the Royal Academy by their respective presidents, a practice which he annually repeated. He began by congratulating the members on the important fact that the patronage of agriculture had been removed from the feeble hands of individuals, and committed to the care of a great national institution. He observed that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to nominate him their President, rather as the proposer of the establishment than as the individual best qualified for the office by talent or experience. His large correspondence, however, with above fifteen hundred individuals, as chairman of the society for the improve-

ment of British wool, and as conductor of the Statistical Account of Scotland, had given him an advantageous position for ascertaining the principles which ought to govern the proceedings of the present new foundation.

He stated his conviction that there existed in the country such immense agricultural resources, such unbounded means of improvement, and such a fund of intellectual power, that, were this power called into exercise, these means applied, and these resources directed to proper objects, Great Britain would be made, what it ought to be, the garden of Europe. He expressed his confidence that the agriculturists of the kingdom were possessed of greater public spirit than was usually ascribed to them, and would readily try experiments and follow practices at once conducive to the public good, and not seriously detrimental to their private interests. Suggestions of this nature would come with more authority from a public board than from private individuals or local associations.

He anticipated some jealousy of the new institution, some rumours to its disadvantage, but he never doubted that in so good a cause industry and perseverance would be triumphant. The great national benefits resulting from the exertions of the Society would silence all opposers. Millions of acres would be redeemed from barrenness, and the whole stock of the kingdom would be ultimately doubled in value.

The first great object of the Board, he observed,

should be to collect facts, as the foundation of theory, and the elements of just and conclusive reasoning. Such information, were it once obtained, would be equally a guide to the farmer, to the landlord, and to the statesman ; to the farmer, by instructing him how to cultivate his fields ; to the landlord, by showing him how to manage his estate ; to the statesman, by pointing out how obstacles and discouragements to improvement might be removed, and facilities created. He instanced Prussia as an example of what royal patronage might effect in the case of agriculture. The great Frederick had doubled by this means the value of his dominions, and had amassed a treasure amounting to many millions sterling.\* He expressed his confidence that the benefits of the institution would not be limited to Britain, but that the hopes of foreign nations would be realized, and the Board become a general magazine of agricultural knowledge for the benefit of the world. “ Agriculture,” he said, “ has this advantage over other arts, that no jealousy subsists among those who are enga-

\* Brenkenhoff, a Prussian agriculturist, brought from Archangel a sort of rye which proved extremely useful throughout the Prussian dominions. Conscious of this great service, whenever he had any favour to ask of the King, he always said,—“ Had I not brought rye from Archangel, your Majesty and your subjects would have been without many thousands you now possess. It is therefore proper that you should grant my request.” The King refused him nothing, and often said, “ I am proud of Brenkenhoff.”—See BARON RIESCHBECK'S *Travels through Germany*.

ged in it, but every discovery which tends to its improvement contributes more essentially than any other to the general good of the species."

He concluded his inaugural address with a pledge, which all acquainted with his history will allow him to have abundantly redeemed by instances of self-denial and sacrifices of fortune, which few make, and almost every one might be pardoned for not attempting. He assured his coadjutors, that, seconded by their hearty co-operation, he would dedicate the whole of his time and labour to the great objects contemplated by the Board, fully convinced that no objects could be more gratifying to the mind at the moment, or recollected afterwards with more heartfelt satisfaction.

The new institution commenced its operations by taking measures for prosecuting a statistical account of England, upon the same plan with that of Scotland, then successfully in progress. The Board printed queries, and prepared specimens of parochial accounts for circulation throughout the ten thousand parishes of England. Arguing from his experience in Scotland, the President anticipated the completion of a magnificent national work from the combined talents and scholarship of the English clergy. He drew up a paper, explaining to them the nature and principles of statistical philosophy, and urging them to exertion by every motive of emulation, of duty, and of public spirit. "The clergy of the Church of

---



England," he says, " who have so long been distinguished by their superiority in every branch of literature, will not surely suffer so favourable an opportunity to escape of adding to their character and their fame. It is an undertaking which, however great and laborious, they undoubtedly have the power, and I have no doubt it will be found they have also the inclination, to accomplish." \*

The completion of a statistical account of England was anticipated not only with general satisfaction at home, but with great interest on the Continent, as a work of inestimable value, such as no other nation was possessed of.†

At this stage, however, of Sir John's proceedings, an obstacle unexpectedly arose which frustrated the whole design. One of the subjects introduced among the queries referred to, was that of *tithes*, preparatory to a plan of equitable and permanent commutation. But it was suggested to Dr Moore, then Archbishop of Canterbury, that all agitation of that question was dangerous; and that the Board, by introducing it, indicated a want of due consideration for the interests of the establishment. His Grace accordingly waited upon the Prime Minister, and informed him, that, if he sanctioned this proceeding, he would lose the friendship and support of the church. On receiving

\* The address may be seen in the communications to the Board, vol. i., Appendix, F.

† *Décade Philosophique, Littéraire et Politique.*

this communication, Mr Pitt intimated to the President, that the Board would be under the necessity of giving up its parochial investigations. Before abandoning a plan which he had much at heart, Sir John addressed a letter to the Archbishop, with the view of removing his opposition. After some complimentary expressions to His Grace, he proceeds to state the increasing dissatisfaction of agriculturists with the existing tithe arrangements, and particularly with the liability of the farmer to the exaction of tithes in kind. He mentions the difficulty he had found in preventing the public expression of these feelings by the farming interest, and then proceeds :—“ I am persuaded it is most for the interest of all parties, that a question of so much delicacy and importance should be taken up by the Board of Agriculture—a body in which so many respectable prelates have officially a seat ; whose opinions will be listened to with the attention due to their office, their character, and their talents ; and where also the most intelligent and respectable members of the landed interest are assembled. The subject, if discussed by such persons, cannot fail to be considered in every possible point of view ; and it cannot be doubted that all the parties interested will have justice done to their respective rights and privileges. The only measure in immediate contemplation, is to abolish the exaction of tithes in kind.\* At the same time, the conversion of

\* “ I have known lands hired and purchased for improvement,

tithes, either into land or into a corn-rent, in any manner that may be most acceptable to the Church of England, will, I am persuaded, be readily acceded to; the object being merely to put an end to that indefinite system of exaction so injurious to agriculture. I must take the liberty of adding, that at a period when new systems are establishing in other countries, and when a republican government in France, where no tithes are permitted, is already virtually acknowledged by this country, it seems to me indispensably necessary for the peace and prosperity of Great Britain, and for the security of the church, that every obstacle to raising food for the people should be removed, and that we should not furnish ground for an unfavourable contrast between our own political situation and that of our neighbours."

My father never ceased to lament the ill success of the foregoing appeal to the Primate as a calamity,

the rent of which was from 1s. to 2s. 6d. per acre; the expense of the improvement has amounted to from L.10 to L.12 per acre; and the produce raised in consequence has been from L.4 to L.6. Tithe taken in kind, in such a case, would amount to as much as the interest of the capital employed; that is, the improver would have ten per cent interest to pay on the money expended, instead of five per cent. There is not a practical farmer in Great Britain, who would not agree that such a payment would be an absolute prohibition on the whole undertaking; for seeing this subject in the same light as that in which every man of common sense must see it, the Board was represented as an enemy to the church."—ARTHUR YOUNG'S *Lecture*, p. 62.

both to the landed interest and to the church. Not only, as he conceived, did this archiepiscopal intervention serve to perpetuate a grievous obstacle to agricultural improvement, but also to keep alive a source of constant irritation and heartburning between the clergyman and his parishioners ; diminishing the comforts and usefulness of the one, and alienating from the establishment the affections of the other. The mysterious veil under which the Archbishop sought to keep the property of the church concealed, produced effects the very opposite to what his Grace intended. Suspicions arose that funds so studiously withheld from view must be enormous, and far greater than the maintenance of the clergy required. A spirit of cupidity was called forth, which a candid disclosure, from the first, of the whole truth would never have excited ; but which, once excited, no subsequent disclosure could effectually put down. My father, therefore, naturally feared that no better opportunity for an equitable and satisfactory adjustment of the question ever would occur, than at the period when the Board of Agriculture now offered its mediation.

Baffled in his attempt to obtain parochial accounts of England, the President had recourse to the plan of county reports—"The immense undertaking," as Arthur Young terms it, "of surveying fourscore provinces, that is to say, an empire, in which no district was to be omitted, from the Land's End to the Orkneys."—"When we reflect," continues this compe-

tent authority, “upon the courage manifested in making this attempt with the limited grant of L.3000, and in addition to all the other objects which occupied the attention of the Board, it will be impossible not to admire the vigour of mind which induced him (the President) to make an experiment that may be called *stupendous*, when compared with the means that existed for its support.”

Having drawn up a plan under distinct heads, so as to secure a general uniformity in the returns, Sir John Sinclair (for to him the whole management of the work was committed by the Board) employed in every county the ablest person he could find to draw up rough sketches, or, as he termed them, *printed manuscripts*, to be circulated among intelligent farmers for additions and corrections. This plan was sometimes objected to on the ground of expense; but he conceived that by no other means was he so likely to procure a full and minute account of the multifarious subjects to be explained; besides that, in some instances, he could not discover agents whose performances might be put forth under the sanction of the Board without amendment.

Notwithstanding the immense surface of territory to be examined and described, these surveys were accomplished at an expense incredibly small; not much more than L.100 for each district, or in all L.10,000. The parsimonious supplies granted to the Board were considered as a reproach to the nation;

and obliged the President reluctantly to employ, in this national work, persons to whose services he could afford a remuneration so inadequate, that, as Arthur Young indignantly remarked, “ the whole allowance made to each surveyor did not exceed three months’ travelling expenses of a shopkeeper’s rider.” \*

Although these county reports were drawn up for the Board of Agriculture, they are not confined merely to agricultural enquiries, but embrace such a variety of information, as to deserve the title of improved local histories, or statistical accounts of each particular district throughout the kingdom. They describe the geographical circumstances of every county ; state of property ; character of the buildings ; political resources, whether from rent, produce, or profit ; progress of manufactures and commerce, and their effects on agriculture ; improvements made by roads and canals ; state of the fisheries ; amount of population ; and, lastly, employment and maintenance of the poor. The returns with respect to agriculture include the tenure of landed property ; the effect of long and short leases ; the payments to which land is subjected, whether in rent, tithe, or

\* Brewster’s Encyclopædia—Article, Agriculture. “ Although British Agriculture with so much difficulty obtained the scanty encouragement of L.3000 a-year, there was no difficulty afterwards in obtaining many times that amount for the Agricultural Societies of Ireland. The Dublin Society obtained annually from the public purse L.8000 ; the Farming Society, L.2500 ; and the Cork Institution, L.2300.”

parochial taxes ; the size of farms, and the different results of large and small occupancies ; the extent of enclosures, whether made by private exertion, or under public authority ; the implements of husbandry, comprehending notices of tools and machines peculiar to certain districts, but capable of general application ; the extent of pasturage and meadows, of woods, plantations, and waste lands ; the price of rural labour ; the means employed to ameliorate the soil, whether by draining, irrigation, paring, burning, manuring, or embanking ; and, finally, the state of live stock, with the various improvements made in that department of rural economy. Referring to these documents in their complete form, “ It may be asserted with safety,” says Arthur Young, “ that no enquirer into the facts on which the science of political economy ought to be founded, can neglect consulting these works, without manifesting an ignorance proportioned to such neglect ; in fact, they may be as useful to a member of the Legislature, as they ought to be to a practical farmer ; and I do not found this assertion on a reference to a few of the *best* of these productions, but am justified in the opinion by a perusal of the worst. It must be in the recollection of many members of the House of Commons, that Mr Pitt founded many of his calculations, that were brought forward in a budget, on the information derived from one of these reports.” Some time afterwards this active and well informed secretary, in a communica-

tion to the President, uses similar expressions. "I dare say," he writes, "you have got all the reports in full operation, and will at last have the satisfaction of seeing that immense work completed, which I believe no one but yourself would ever have effected."\*

This eulogium from the pen of Mr Arthur Young may be followed up by those of other eminent agriculturists. "In the course of little more than one year," says Dr James Anderson, "the Board of Agriculture has printed already a number of authentic facts respecting the agricultural and internal economy of this country, greater than was ever obtained in any other nation since the beginning of time; on which facts the political enquirer can ground his reasonings on many of the most important topics that can ever engage his attention, with a degree of certainty he could never have otherwise acquired."† Dr Coventry, Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh, uses language equally decided; declaring that, "in the corrected reports and publications therewith connected, there is detailed more useful and distinct information, on various branches of agriculture, and on rural concerns in general, than was in print before these were drawn up."‡ In a letter to the President, Mr George Dempster, M.P.

\* Letter, dated Bradfield Hall, December 30, 1808.

† See Essays, vol. iii. p. 4.

‡ Discourses on Agriculture and Rural Economy, October, 1808, vol. i. p. 187.



for Forfar, says, " I have purchased all the Agricultural Reports ; they are composed with care, and drawn up in a masterly manner, and are, in my opinion, inestimable." \*

One of the contributors to this series of reports was the President himself, who undertook and completed the task of describing the three northern counties of Scotland.

Among the many advantages arising from these reports, not the least important was the extension throughout the kingdom of discoveries and practices before confined to certain districts. One example will be sufficient : On the banks of the Humber, a peculiar method of improvement, known by the name of *warping*, had for a long period been successfully employed. A river, charged with alluvial matter, was allowed to flow gently into a field embanked for that purpose, and to remain there until the mud or *warp* was deposited, when the clear water was drained off again. Every agriculturist is now familiar with the term, but the practice was never so much as mentioned in any work on agriculture, till it was brought to light by the surveys of the Board. On the great fertility resulting from this process, it would be needless for me to enlarge.†

A distinguished encourager of the Board in this great national survey was King George III., who,

\* Letter, dated Dunnichen, 30th June, 1807.

† Address to the Board. 1813.

to his other estimable qualities, added zeal for Agriculture. The President addressed a letter to his Majesty, representing to him the importance of the undertaking; the difficulty of finding persons willing as well as able to take a share in its execution; and the advantage which the Board might derive from being enabled to tell the public that the King took an interest in their labours, and had asked for a list of their surveyors. The following answer, written in the King's name, was sent to the President by the Hon. R. F. Greville:—

“ Sir,

“ I had the honour of receiving yours from Edinburgh of the 23d instant, and had the honour this day of presenting to his Majesty the letter enclosed and directed to him. His Majesty, in answer to it, was pleased to command me to say, that he much approves of the proceedings of the Board of Agriculture, and the zeal with which you as President have forwarded them. His Majesty was also pleased to add, that he considers the success of the Board of Agriculture as a concern which very essentially interests the general good of the community at large, and that he shall consider every person who comes forward with his assistance on this business as contributing importantly to the good of his country.

“ I am further commanded by his Majesty to inform you, that he thinks, during the time you are

sending to those whose abilities have pointed them out to your notice, as proper persons to assist you in the final execution of the work, that you would do right to digest thoroughly the plan of the whole under the chapters you mention ; and when you have finally settled (to your satisfaction) with them, the ' General Report,' his Majesty is pleased to say, that he shall be glad to look at the heads of the chapters of a work which, when completed, promises such general improvement to the interests of his kingdoms, and to which the attention of the Board of Agriculture is so constantly directed.

“ The names also of the gentlemen who come forward in assisting you in arranging the General Report will, I am also commanded by his Majesty to say, be very acceptable. I have the honour to be, sir,

“ Your most obedient and faithful servant,

“ ROBERT F. GREVILLE.

“ Weymouth, 29th Aug. 1794.”

Another evidence may here be mentioned of the patriotic interest taken by George III. in the proceedings of the Board. It is a letter transmitted to the President, by his Majesty's command, from the Royal Electoral Society of Rural Economy at Zell. The secretary, Dr Thaer, informs Sir John that the King having taken that society under his especial patronage, had commanded them to form the closest possible connexion with the British Board of Agri-

culture, and to establish, for the common benefit of his dominions, as well insular as continental, a constant interchange of intelligence and productions. The Doctor adds, that the Hanoverian agriculturists, in common with their brethren in Great Britain, had much at heart the preparation of a general enclosure bill, and that the King had assured them of his assistance in the removal of that grievous obstacle to extended cultivation.

By the following extracts of a letter from the Duke of Clarence, it will be evident to the reader that His Royal Highness inherited a large share of the predilection for Agriculture, which marked the character of his venerable father. “ Though the son of the late king, I believe I may, with equal truth and satisfaction, assert, that whenever time has softened down the events of the late reign, the British empire will do justice to George III., and acknowledge him to have been a monarch most honourably and ably attached to those over whom he was placed by the Almighty.

“ I have endeavoured to imbibe his ideas, and to arrange my thoughts on the various points connected with the interests of this great empire, according to his experience and judgment, after so many years of constant trial.

“ I have in particular venerated the attention paid by our late revered Sovereign to Agriculture, which I have ever considered to be the surest foundation of

the commercial and manufacturing energies and prosperity of the country."

The importance of a national survey, such as that effected by the Board, may be estimated from the eagerness with which the plan was adopted in the countries most anxious for the developement of their own resources. In Russia, the Rev. Arthur Young, son of the secretary, and one of the surveyors to the Board, was engaged by the Government, at a great expense, to draw up a report for the province of Moscow, as an example of what might be done in other parts of that great empire.\* In France, a national survey was begun under the Directory, and carried forward with great energy by the Emperor Napoleon; but as M. Say, the great French economist, observes, in a letter to Sir John Sinclair, dated Paris, 25th January 1821, "It is hardly to be credited that Buonaparte, with all his power, could never obtain from all his prefects and sub-prefects those reports which he frequently demanded from them with regard

\* From the following letter of Mr Arthur Young, senior, to my father, dated 26th Feb. 1805, it would appear that the Russian government, in their zeal for statistical enquiries, attempted to inveigle the secretary himself. "My son and his wife go to Moscow in a fortnight. The Emperor Alexander will have reports of all the governments of Russia like ours, and Arthur goes to do the government of Moscow for an example—thirteen times as large as Norfolk—they wanted me, but—the Board."

to the statistics of France.\* There is here," he continues, "in the department of the Minister of the Interior, a Board of Statistics, which scarcely furnishes any thing useful to the researches of the learned. It is very difficult, therefore, beyond the boundaries of Great Britain, to procure any thing either complete or worthy of credit." The illustrious founder of the American republic, the great Washington, whom I have already quoted among my father's confidential correspondents, thus expresses his opinion of these reports: "I have read, with much pleasure and approbation, the work you patronise, so much to your own honour and the utility of the public. Such a general view of agriculture in the several counties of Great Britain is extremely interesting, and cannot fail of being very beneficial to the agricultural concerns of your country, and to those of every other wherein they are read, and must entitle you to their warmest thanks for having set such a plan on foot, and for prosecuting it with the zeal and intelligence you do. I am so much pleased with the plan and execution myself, as to pray you to have the goodness to direct your bookseller to continue to forward them to me. When the whole are received, I will promote, as far in me lies, the reprinting of them here.

\* "Croiriez-vous que Buonaparte, malgré tout son pouvoir, n'a jamais pu obtenir de la totalité des préfets et sous-préfets, les rapports qu'il leur a plusieurs fois demandés, sur la Statistique de la France?"

“ I know of no pursuit in which more real and important service can be rendered to any country, than by improving its agriculture, its breed of useful animals, and other branches of a husbandman’s care ; nor can I conceive any plan more conducive to this end, than the one you have introduced for bringing to view the actual state of them in all parts of the kingdom, by which good and bad habits are exhibited in a manner too plain to be misconceived. For, the accounts given to the British Board of Agriculture appear in general to be drawn up in a masterly manner, so as fully to answer the expectations formed in the excellent plan which produced them ; affording, at the same time, a fund of information useful in political economy, and serviceable in all countries.”

Upon the basis of these volumes, which amounted in all to fifty, the Board proposed to construct two “ General Reports,” one for Scotland, and another for England, comprising, in a condensed form, all the valuable materials scattered throughout the whole collection: Having, in the case of Scotland, the advantage of parochial accounts, the President resolved to commence with that country. At the request, however, of Sir Joseph Banks, he was induced previously to draw up a work, entitled, “ An account of the Husbandry of Scotland.” Sir Joseph had a high opinion of the skill, intelligence, and economy of the Scottish farmers. “ Agriculture,” he said, “ has derived, is deriving, and will derive more benefit from

Scotch industry and skill, than has been accumulated since the days when Adam first wielded the spade."

In the preparation of this work, Sir John visited the districts in Scotland most celebrated for cultivation ; circulated queries among the most intelligent farmers ; compared their answers so as to form them into a regular system ; and distributed the results in a printed form to receive the remarks of intelligent friends. On transmitting copies of these results to Arthur Young, the Secretary returned the following reply :—

" Mr Young has read the papers on the husbandry of Scotland with attention ; and he waits, with great impatience, to see a work complete which will form a new era in agricultural knowledge. He sincerely hopes that Sir John Sinclair will be blessed with health, strength, and spirits to perfect so great an undertaking.

" Bradfield, September 4, 1810."

When the whole work was completed, the author sent a copy to Sir Joseph Banks, accompanied with the following letter :—

" My dear Sir Joseph,

" I have at last the pleasure of sending you a complete copy of the work, undertaken at your desire, on the Husbandry of Scotland. Whether you



will have any grounds to regret having made the request, from defects in the execution of the plan, or I to lament complying with your wishes, in consequence of the peltings which I shall receive, as a matter of course, from the critics who may be induced to rail at it, will, in process of time, appear. At all events, I shall have one satisfaction, that it may be the means of handing down our names to posterity together, as zealous friends to the improvement and agricultural prosperity of the country."

Sir Joseph's answer, dated Soho Square, March 11, 1812, was as follows :

" On my return from Lincolnshire this morning, I found your favour, and am thankful for it in all ways. I thank you for having allowed my little bark to sail in company with your vessel down the stream of time. I have no fear of criticism on your book. It contains a mass of valuable information, sufficient to resist all the attacks which envy and malice can aim at it."

Passing over many eminent authorities in the south, I shall only add another from the extreme north.\* In

\* Above fifty of the most distinguished practical agriculturists in England and the Lowlands of Scotland wrote letters to my father, expressing, in the strongest terms, their cordial approbation of his work. I may instance Bishop Watson, Arthur Young, George Culley, Brown of Markle, Brodie of Scoughall,

a letter to Sir John, dated Kirkwall, 10th November, 1812, Malcolm Laing, the historian, writes :—" From your truly valuable work on Scottish husbandry, I have derived more real information than I ever met with before."

The approbation of these agriculturists is confirmed by that of the eminent statist, Mr Malthus. " I found," says he, writing to the President, " your husbandry of Scotland full of interesting information, and some that I particularly wished to obtain."

The work in question proved as useful abroad as it was at home. It became well known upon the continent in consequence of the greater part having been translated and introduced into the *Bibliothèque Britannique*.\* It appears also to have contributed towards diffusing the Scottish system of husbandry over America. The latter fact is stated by Mr John Young, Secretary to the Agricultural Society of Nova Scotia, in a communication to Sir John Sinclair, accompanying a copy of Mr Young's valuable letters of *Agricola* on the principles of vegetation and tillage.†

Soon after the " Husbandry of Scotland" appeared the " General Report" of that kingdom, for which preparation had for some time been making. This

Robertson of Almond, Dudgeon of Primrose-hill, Rennie of Oxwell-mains, Robertson of Ladykirk, Hume of East Barns, Dempster of Dunnichen, &c.

\* Bib. Brit. tom. xix., et seq.

† Letter, dated Halifax, 4th January, 1823.

elaborate performance consists of five closely printed volumes, three occupied by the report itself, and two by an appendix. The report describes not only the agricultural state, but the political circumstances of Scotland ; and, under nineteen heads, comprises all the information necessary, in the opinion of the Board, either to the executive or the legislative, for the government of the country. In the appendix are contained details and authorities not interesting to the general reader.

As this digest, unlike the county surveys, was to be published by authority, no exertion was omitted to make it accurate and complete. In preparing the county surveys, the Board had frequently no choice of writers, and had, therefore, declared expressly that it would not be answerable for the statements made. Ill-natured critics, however, affecting ignorance of this fact, blamed the Institution for all the errors and discrepancies to be discovered in that vast collection. Such severity of criticism should have been reserved for the General Report, for which the Board acknowledged itself responsible. In drawing up this work, the best informed agriculturists were selected as contributors ; to each of them one, or, at the utmost, two or three chapters were intrusted ; and in cases where the subject was of great importance, a single section only was committed to one writer. So various are the questions connected, either directly or indirectly, with the agricultural interests, the political economy,

or the internal improvement of a country, that no one individual, nor even two or three individuals, it was conceived, were competent to explain them all. A corn farmer might be unacquainted with the management of grass land,—a grazier might not be able to describe the buildings or the implements of husbandry necessary to the farmer. Persons, therefore, peculiarly conversant with each subject were selected; all the information in the county surveys belonging to their respective departments was afforded them; together with any other publications which, in conjunction with their own personal observation and experience, might enable them to complete the portions of the work which they had severally undertaken. The chapters or sections thus prepared, were afterwards submitted, in a printed form, to the revision of the best informed farmers and political economists. The outline was formed, and the execution superintended, by the President.

It will not be expected of me to describe in detail the subject-matter of the “General Report.” As the work itself professes to be an abridgement, I shall not attempt to abridge it further; but shall content myself with bringing forward a few out of the many distinguished testimonies before me to its utility and completeness.

George Dempster, M. P., than whom no man was better acquainted with Scotland, calls this Report “the best geographical description ever published of

any kingdom.”\* Sir Humphrey Davy, in the advertisement to the first edition of his “Lectures on Agricultural Chemistry,” after expressing his regret that the book had not come into his hands till the concluding sheets of his lectures were printed, adds, “Had it been in circulation before, I should have profited by many statements given in it.” Count Hauterive, in his Elements of Political Economy, remarks, “that the work was certainly one of the first extant in positive information, and in judicious remarks. I am persuaded,” he continues, “that it will be of great utility, not only to the agriculture of Scotland, and to those industrious classes whose commerce and industry are exercised on its productions, but likewise to the agriculture and industry of all other countries.”

According to his original plan, Sir John Sinclair was about to grapple with the difficulties of a more comprehensive undertaking—that of preparing, from the forty octavo volumes of county surveys, a general report of England. When he communicated his intention to Sir Joseph Banks, the latter was astonished at the boldness of the enterprise, and expressed his wonder that an individual should have the hardihood to undertake even the perusal of a collection which was in itself a library. In a letter, dated the 13th December, he says, “I think I may fairly say, that

\* Letter from Mr Dempster, dated Aug. 8, 1811.

no man ever yet has, or ever will be, endowed with patience enough to read through the whole, except only yourself. My dear Sir John," he proceeds, "however skilled you may be in concentration, *the very reading through the matter you intend to abridge, is the labour of some years.*" Whether this remonstrance was of itself effectual, or whether other causes contributed to withdraw Sir John's attention from the subject, does not appear ; but the "General Report of England" was never completed.

In addition to these County Reports, the Board published six quarto volumes of communications from intelligent agriculturists, both foreign and domestic ; some written in answer to queries sent by the President, and some containing suggestions which the writer considered useful. The names of the most distinguished characters, literary, scientific, and political, occur in the list of contributors—as Bishop Watson, Dr Priestley, Sir Joseph Banks, General Washington, Count Hertzberg, Count Bernstorff, Gisborne, Roscoe, Davy, Cline, &c.

As an example of the energy and success with which the Board collected the materials for these volumes, I may instance their Report upon the question submitted to them by the House of Lords, as to "the best means of converting certain portions of grass land into tillage, without exhausting the soil, and of returning the same to grass, after a certain period, in an improved state, or at least without in-

jury." To elicit information, the Board offered premiums to the amount of several hundred pounds, for the best essays upon the subject, specified the particulars most necessary to be enlarged upon, and circulated their proposals among farmers and graziers throughout the kingdom. The essays transmitted in return amounted to the surprising number of three hundred and fifty. Some of these were printed at full length, extracts were made from others, and a mass of information printed, such as never was before accumulated upon any subject within the range of agriculture. Not only do these papers give a full description of the grass land which may be broken up with impunity, but also of the land from which the plough should be absolutely prohibited. They specify the crops which should be sown, whether to alleviate the pressure of scarcity, or to provide for ordinary demands; and they prescribe for laying down to grass, rules adapted to all varieties of soil. To these rules Arthur Young refers, with honest pride, as a code of such authority, that it would be "a species of temerity" to controvert them.\*

Nor did the Board confine their efforts to the *collection* and *diffusion* of agricultural knowledge; they endeavoured also to *arrange* it—to connect husbandry with philosophy, or, as the Founder of the institution frequently expressed himself, "to raise agriculture

\* See Communications, vol. iii.

from the level of an art to the dignity of a science." They wished its process no longer to be carried on blindly or empirically, but to be formed into a regular system, and conducted upon rational and experimental principles. The two branches of science from which the greatest aid might be expected, were vegetable physiology and chemistry ; the Board therefore endeavoured to prevail on men of eminence in these departments to employ their scientific attainments in arranging and combining, theoretically, the miscellaneous facts and loose notions of which agricultural knowledge at that time exclusively consisted. Among the most valuable results of these endeavours were Darwin's *Phytologia*, and Davy's *Lectures on Agricultural Chemistry*.

The *Phytologia*, or *Philosophy of Agriculture and Gardening*, was dedicated by the author, in the most cordial terms of friendship and esteem, to Sir John Sinclair, as a work " begun at his instigation, and forwarded by his encouragement." Dr Darwin entered warmly into Sir John's feeling of indignation, that husbandry had till then been so much neglected by the learned, and that at a time when many branches of knowledge, far inferior in importance, had been carefully arranged and digested into sciences, agriculture and gardening, though of such great utility in producing the nutriment of mankind, continued to be only arts.\* The work comprises three parts, of

\* Introduction to Darwin's *Phytologia*.



which the first explains the physiology of vegetation ; the second describes the economy of vegetation ; and the third applies the principles thus established to agricultural and horticultural productions. Among the casual discoveries which this ingenious work had the merit of bringing forward, was the use of bone dust as a manure. Having mentioned phosphorus as an element under different forms, existing universally in vegetables, and not before sufficiently attended to, the Doctor specifies the different substances from which this essential food of plants may be obtained, and which therefore might be advantageously employed as manure ; he then proceeds—" and, lastly, the use of recent shells, or bones ground into powder, or of bone ashes, may be deduced, as they consist almost entirely of phosphorus and calcareous earth." \* The fertilizing properties of this manure had been previously noticed by Hunter, but they were first theoretically explained and brought forward with authority by Dr Darwin. Perhaps no modern discovery has contributed so powerfully to improve the fertility and to increase the produce of the soil, as the use of bone dust. Nothing but experience would render credible the strong and lasting effects produced by even small quantities of this active substance.

The Board was not less successful in the case of chemistry than of vegetable physiology. So early as

\* *Phytologia*, sec. x. 5. 5. Hunter's *Georgical Essays*, vol. ii. p. 93, where Mr St Leger's experiments are described.

the third year of their establishment, they prevailed upon Dr Fordyce, a chemist of reputation, to make some interesting experiments upon a large scale, with the view of ascertaining the principles of vegetation, and the effects of different manures. They afterwards found another individual, peculiarly qualified, both by his philosophical acquirements, and by his taste for farming, to illustrate the connexion between chemistry and agriculture. Mr Davy, afterwards Sir Humphrey Davy, had studied husbandry in early life under his father, a well-informed Cornish agriculturist, and was at that time lecturing upon chemistry at the Royal Institution in London. The Board requested him to deliver, in their apartments, a course of lectures on agricultural chemistry, and though the poverty of their exchequer precluded them from offering him any adequate remuneration, yet his hereditary zeal for agriculture induced him to accept the appointment. He gave his first course of lectures in 1803, and repeated it annually till 1813.

This eminent philosopher thus describes the object of his course, showing that, like his scientific cotemporary Dr Darwin, he entered warmly into Sir John Sinclair's recommendations. "Agricultural chemistry," he says, "has for its objects all those changes in the arrangements of matter connected with the growth and nourishment of plants, the comparative values of their produce as food, the constitution of soils the manner in which lands are enriched by ma-

nure, or rendered fertile by the different processes of cultivation. Enquiries of such a nature cannot but be interesting and important both to the theoretical agriculturist and the practical farmer. To the first they are necessary in supplying most of the fundamental principles on which the theory of the art depends; to the second they are useful in affording simple and easy experiments for directing his labours, and for enabling him to pursue a certain and scientific plan of improvement."

He illustrates these remarks by some appropriate examples, clearly showing the advantages to be derived by agriculture from chemical research. "It is scarcely possible to enter upon any investigation of agriculture, without finding it connected, more or less, with doctrines or elucidations derived from chemistry.

"If land be unproductive, and a system of ameliorating it is to be attempted, the sure method of obtaining the object is by determining the cause of its sterility, which must necessarily depend upon some defect in the constitution of the soil, which may be easily discovered by chemical analysis.

"Some lands of good apparent texture are yet sterile in a high degree; and common observation and common practice afford no means of ascertaining the cause, or of removing the effect. The application of chemical tests in such cases is obvious; for the soil must contain some noxious principle which

may be easily discovered, and probably easily destroyed.

“ Are any of the salts of iron present? they may be decomposed by lime. Is there an excess of silicious sand? the system of improvement must depend on the application of clay and calcareous matter. Is there a defect of calcareous matter? The remedy is obvious; it may be removed by liming, paring, and burning. Is there a deficiency of vegetable matter? it is to be supplied by manure.”

The philosophical lecturer gives other interesting examples, but those already stated will explain sufficiently, even to general readers, the practical character of his lectures, and the invaluable uses of chemistry, as applied to farming. The whole course included eight lectures, in which the subjects treated of are the general powers of matter which influence vegetation, gravitation, cohesion, chemical attraction, light, heat, &c.; soils and their different parts; the atmosphere; manures, animal and vegetable, as well as mineral, together with the various means of improving land on chemical principles. Towards the conclusion, he expresses his hope that some of the views brought forward might contribute to the improvement of this most important and useful of the arts. “ I trust,” he adds, “ that the enquiry will be pursued by others, and that in proportion as chemical philosophy advances towards perfection, it will afford new aids to agriculture.”

Sir John warmly urged the publication of these valuable lectures, but the author's numerous avocations long prevented him from acceding to this request. In October 24, 1809, he writes, "I shall do what I can to make my lectures worthy of publication next season." It was not till four years afterwards, when the lectures had been delivered for the tenth time, that they were at last submitted to the public. Their reception must have been highly gratifying to the writer; they were warmly eulogized by the cotemporary critics; several editions have been called for, and translations made into almost all the languages of Europe.

Besides these scientific works, many valuable writings on the practice and details of farming were undertaken at the suggestion of the Board, and published under the auspices of the President. My father's library includes a large collection of volumes, containing acknowledgments of the patronage and encouragement which he had given to the respective authors. I may mention, as examples, Tatham's *National Irrigation*, Anderson's *Practical Treatise on Peat Moss*, Williams on *Climate*,\* *Le Conteur on the Orchards of Jersey*, Gray's *Plough-wright's Assistant*, Neill's *Horticultural Tour in Flanders*, and Brown of Markle's *Treatise on Rural Affairs*. In

\* I have read, with inconceivable delight, Mr Williams' book on our Climate, and envy you for being its patron."—*Letter from George Dempster, Esq. M.P. Dunnichen, Forfar, 30th June, 1808.*

dedicating the last mentioned work to Sir John Sinclair, Mr Brown remarks, that his treatise "could not with propriety be committed to the protection of any other person than of him who first turned the author's attention to the subjects which it embraces." It is indeed impossible for me to enumerate half the instances in which my father benefited the public (sometimes at a considerable expense to himself), by persuading or enabling intelligent individuals to publish valuable information.\*

Another mode in which the Board of Agriculture elicited and diffused information was, by discussions among its members at their regular meetings for business. Men of intelligence and activity, such as Sir Joseph Banks, the Duke of Bedford, Mr Coke of

\* Among other works which my father caused to be written, may be mentioned Dr Kelly's very able and useful performance, "The Cambist," which, soon after its publication, in consequence of affording great facilities to calculation, was introduced into the offices of the Bank, the India House, and other companies, as well as at the Board of Trade. In a letter, dated June 13, 1811, Dr Kelly writes, "I wish to ask your advice respecting the Cambist, as I hope you will always feel something like a parental interest in its success, for it certainly owes its origin to your able suggestion." And again, Feb. 1822, he repeats the same acknowledgment: "I now beg to turn to another subject, in which you have been essentially concerned. By the enclosed prospectus you will see the success of my *Cambist*, which indeed may be also called *your Cambist*, as it owes its origin to your letters to the Bank directors, written in 1797." I may add, that a History of Scotland was dedicated to Sir John, in 1794, by Mr Robert Heron, "in acknowledgment for important information derived from his statistical researches."

Norfolk, Bishop Watson, Lord Sheffield, Mr Curwen, and others, could hardly assemble on any occasion without bringing forward valuable hints and observations on their favourite study, collected from the agricultural experience of widely-distant counties. As the Secretary remarked, in a lecture to the Board, "It was not likely that the talents which blazed at Woburn should become extinguished in Sackville Street; that the genius which illuminated Petworth should become a common mortal by association in this room, or that a Coke should lose all knowledge of turnips, and a Somerville all his skill in cattle, by entering these doors." To the honour of the Board, it should be added, that in the intercourse of the members uninterrupted harmony and cordiality prevailed. Among them were included leading characters of all political parties; yet, as if by common consent, every reference to politics was carefully excluded. No discussion, however interesting or protracted, gave rise, in any instance, to bitterness of language. "I am not aware," says Lord Carrington, "that even a single expression has ever fallen from the lips of any member that could wound the feelings of another."\*

Besides communicating knowledge by its printed works, the Board assisted individuals with advice. Queries from every part of the kingdom were received, and punctually replied to. "In this institution," to

\* Address to the Board in 1803.

use the words of Brewster's Encyclopedia, "a common fortress, erected for the benefit of all agriculturists, and to which each might resort for advice and protection, was immediately recognised." The officers of the Board afforded at all times, to all persons, every instruction in their power. They instituted whatever enquiries might be necessary for that purpose, and introduced persons to each other who might be mutually useful. Arthur Young computed that he had done so in some thousands of cases. The President observed invariably a rule to receive with civility all visitors, whether they came to ask or to give intelligence. He knew how frequently the conductors of a public department consider themselves insulted by individuals presuming to advise them, as if advice implied aspersion on their sagacity or knowledge. For his own part, he made no pretension to this official plenitude of wisdom. Even when the propositions made to him were manifestly absurd, he listened to his adviser with attention, and dismissed him with urbanity. A gentleman, who proposed to drain the kingdom with the broken china of the East India House, was so pleased with his polite reception, as to offer, in return, his vote at the next election, either for Kent or Middlesex.

Others were less disinterested than this grateful projector. They came with secrets to the President, which they required him to purchase, without previously informing himself of their value, and were



indignant at the over-cautious rule of the Board, never to purchase a discovery without proof of its utility.

Another duty which the Board imposed upon themselves, was that of discovering and rewarding merit. Not only did they encourage every valuable suggestion, but offered premiums from time to time for works of useful invention ; and brought forward into public notice meritorious individuals, whose discoveries might otherwise have died with them. One or two examples will suffice to show the generous activity of the Board in this department. Having heard, from various quarters, of Elkington's extraordinary success in draining land on principles known only to himself, they entered into correspondence with him, and were so impressed by the importance of his plan, that they interested themselves in procuring for him a grant from Parliament of L.1000, which, in his pecuniary distress, caused by neglect of his own private affairs for the public benefit, proved a most seasonable relief.

Elkington, notwithstanding his natural sagacity, was a man of uncultivated mind, and so confused in explaining his ideas, that he was utterly unable, however willing, to develope those very processes which he was conducting with so much industry and success. The Board therefore employed Mr Johnstone of Edinburgh, a skilful surveyor and drainer of land, to make a journey along with Elkington, for the pur-

pose of examining, on the spot, the chief drainages which had been effected on his system, and of eliciting, by judicious queries, the principles by which he regulated his operations. So successful was this measure, that Johnstone became master of the art, and, in a treatise published by the Board, explained and illustrated the new system. Thus Elkington's discoveries, instead of being lost, are now in practice throughout the kingdom.\* Johnstone's treatise is

\* From a multitude of letters which passed between my father and Mr Elkington, I select one specimen, illustrative of his homely style and grateful disposition.

“ Meadley, January the 21st, 1799.

“ Sir John,

“ I yesterday received a letter from your honour, dated at Edinburgh, January the 2d, 99, requesting me to inform you or give you authority to pay Messrs Little and Woodcock their claim against me, which I most humbly request you to do, and settle it with them the first opportunity ; hoping you will excuse me in my situation for the trouble I give you, and I most gratefully acknowledge you to be my most sincere friend. I was not able to go up to London when your honour requested me in your former letter, nor even to write to you, but I desired my son to write and inform you ; for I have not wrote so much as in this letter before October last, since I was taken ill ; but thank God, I am getting better apace, and am in hopes I shall be able to finish his Grace the Duke of Bedford's draining, and all my friends about London the next summer, and bring my son with me. I remain, with the uttmost gratitude, your honour's most faithfull and obedient servant,

“ JOSEPH ELKINGTON.

“ P.S. Please to take care of, or destroy any note when you settle with Mr Little and Co.”

In a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to my father, the following

considered by competent judges to be of standard authority, and has gone through three editions; the last of which, published in 1835, is so much improved by valuable additions and corrections, as to be almost a new work.

Another meritorious individual, whom the Board had the satisfaction of introducing to public attention, was the celebrated Mr Loudon Macadam, beyond question the most eminent of road surveyors. In 1810, Sir John Sinclair, as President of the Board, received from Mr Macadam a communication, stating that, in his opinion, the system of road-making broughout the kingdom was imperfect and expensive. This gentleman had been long endeavouring to get his plans fairly tried, and brought under public notice; but had been much discouraged by his ill success. Sir John, being pleased with the suggestions in his letter, resolved to bring them under the notice of a Parliamentary Committee on highways, which, by a coincidence fortunate for Mr Macadam, was then sitting; and of which the President of the Board of Agriculture was Chairman.† To give the passage occurs in connexion with the present subject. “The L.200 which you sent to Elkington on Monday se’ennight, I considered as a sacrifice to the credit and reputation of the Board, which did you infinite honour.”

\* See Quarterly Journal of Agriculture for September, 1836. Among Johnstone’s earliest patrons was Henry Duke of Buccleuch, who, in 1797, wrote to Sir John, “I am more and more satisfied with Johnstone’s skill.”

† In 1811, Mr Macadam writes, “This subject” (that of road-

new method a better chance of success, my father caused the information sent by Mr Macadam to be arranged and condensed ; and had it printed in the Appendix to the Report of the Committee. This Parliamentary approbation of Macadam's system encouraged him to persevere in his exertions, and led to his ultimate success. In 1815, the roads in the vicinity of Bristol were placed under his charge, and afterwards those of Bath. This example was followed in other districts. Macadam's method was by degrees extended over the whole island, and subsequently adopted in foreign countries.\* This ingenious projector, long after he had risen to eminence, acknowledged, with honourable candour, his obligations to Sir John Sinclair as his original patron.

The following curious memorandum upon the subject, is extracted from my father's private papers :—

“ Going one day into the Albyn Club at Edinburgh, I observed an old gentleman sitting alone, with a newspaper in his hand. As soon as he observed me, he came forward and expressed, in strong terms, his satisfaction at having met with an individual to whom he was so much indebted. To my enquiry, whom I had the pleasure of conversing with,

making) “ falls particularly under the care of the Board of Agriculture ; at least it is only from that useful body that there can be any hope of the subject's being powerfully brought under the notice of Government and the Legislature.”

\* A full account of his system is contained in a Practical Essay, addressed by him to the Board in 1819.

he answered that his name was Macadam. I told him that I well remembered corresponding with him when I was chairman of a committee on highways ; and that he had transmitted to me valuable information, which I had much pleasure in recommending to public notice in the report. I added, at the same time, how much it gratified me to hear from all quarters of the magnificent improvements he was carrying forward in the roads all over the kingdom ; not only on the great lines of communication, but also upon byways and lesser intersections. Upon this Mr Macadam said emphatically, ‘ It is owing to you, Sir John, that these improvements were ever made. The fact is, that, at the time you applied to me for the information you refer to, I had resolved to give up all concern with these matters ; but the countenance and encouragement I received from you revived my energy, and I determined, in spite of all opposition, to persevere. I have since thriven beyond my utmost hopes ; but it was altogether owing to the encouragement you gave me at a critical moment that my schemes were not abandoned.’ I again expressed my satisfaction at having contributed to promote plans of such utility, adding, ‘ You can do me, Mr Macadam, a very singular favour, and one likely to be productive of much public advantage. I occasionally attend public meetings, where useful projects are brought forward. It is a rule with me to recommend that they should be allowed a fair trial ; others

act upon a different principle; they take pleasure in objecting to new plans, and endeavour to run them down. Now, if you will repeat to me in writing what you have stated in conversation, it will arm me with a very strong reply to these objectors, and may prevent many useful projects from being stifled in the birth.' Mr Macadam approved much of the suggestion, and sent me next morning a letter to the effect required."

The most useful implement introduced into the practice of husbandry during the last century, was the "Thrashing-machine." For this invention husbandry is indebted to Mr Andrew Meikle, an ingenious millwright of Tynningham, in East Lothian. The advantages of this machine consist in saving an immense amount of manual labour, in separating the grain from the straw more perfectly and expeditiously than any previous method; and in saving the produce of the grain to the extent of one-twentieth. It has been calculated, that, if this contrivance were universally adopted, a profit would accrue to the country of L.1,800,000 per annum. Having learned that the meritorious inventor of this machine was labouring under pecuniary difficulties, my father promptly interposed for his relief. In the case of Elkington he had applied to Parliament; but, in the present instance, he had recourse to private subscription, and, in his quality of President, addressed a letter to the Earl of Haddington, Lord Lieutenant of East Lo-

thian, recommending to the attention of the landed and farming interests in that county, the case of this deserving mechanist, who, in addition to his other claims, was an inhabitant of the shire. A meeting was called on the 26th December, 1809, when resolutions were adopted, approving of Sir John's suggestion, and appointing a committee to carry it into effect. The sum of L.1500 was by this means raised, and the family of Meikle rescued from the abject poverty into which they were fast descending.\*

The President made a similar exertion to raise from indigence the family of James Small, who had done good service to Scottish agriculture by his improvements in the construction of the plough. Such well-directed exertions of public spirit gave an assurance to ingenious men that their inventions, however slow of rising into notice, would not be ultimately left unrecompensed ; and that, although they should receive no benefit while living, they had the prospect of being rewarded in the persons of their descendants.

But among the most imperative duties of the Board, was that of using the information they acquired, as the basis of suggestions both to the public

\* " Should your late tour to East Lothian," says George Dempster, " procure a suitable reward to the inventor of the thrashing-mill, it will redound much to your and the nation's honour. Our heathen ancestors would have assigned a place in heaven to Mr Meikle."—*Letter, dated Dunnichen, 3d December, 1809.*

and the Legislature. On occasions of scarcity, they often interposed beneficially to prevent or to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. Hardly had the institution been established, when a deficiency in the wheat crop raised to an alarming height the price of bread throughout the kingdom. As the most immediate measure of relief, the Board caused experiments to be tried in the manufacture of bread, from every species of grain that could be made to enter into its composition. No less than eighty different kinds of bread were soon exhibited, to the astonishment of the public, as the result of these enquiries. Without enumerating the multifarious materials suggested under every possible combination, I may quote the remark of an unquestionable authority on this subject, that "The Board, for having turned its attention to the great question of substitutes for wheat in the manufacture of bread, deserved the gratitude of posterity." \*

Another suggestion of the Board was still more beneficial. Anticipating the scarcity in 1794, they recommended an increased attention to the cultivation of potatoes. Fifty thousand additional acres were in consequence planted, and produced a supply of food sufficient for the support, during six months, of nearly a million of the population.† A report was

\* Eldin on Bread.

† See the President's address to the Board, in 1795, Appendix L., p. 62. Sir William Pulteney wrote to Sir John from



also drawn up and printed, containing all the information that could be collected, either at home or abroad, with reference to that valuable root. The most important desideratum was a cheap and easy method of preserving potatoes, so that the abundance of one crop might make amends for the deficiency of another. An experiment was tried of cutting them into thin slices, and drying them upon a hop-oast or kiln. The expense was trifling, and it was ascertained that they might then be kept for a long period. Sir John used to show his friends specimens of potato-flour, and potato slices, which, at the suggestion of the Board, had been sent to New South Wales, and, forty years afterwards, were as fit for use as on the day they were prepared.

As the wheat crop in 1795 was below the average, and the scarcity appeared likely to continue, the Board urged the farming interest to immediate and extraordinary exertions for providing a supply. The President wrote a letter upon the subject, which was circulated among the members, transmitted to the quarter-sessions of the different counties, and printed in above fifty newspapers. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the result. Intelligence arrived from all quarters, that a greater quantity of wheat had

Wolverhampton, that the people of that large town had been without bread for four days, but had not suffered, owing to "the astonishing quantity of potatoes planted in that neighbourhood in consequence of the recommendation of the Board."

been sown than at any period within the memory of man.\*

To take one more example : when the country, in 1800, was again threatened with the horrors of famine, the humane activity of the Board may be advantageously contrasted with the supineness of the Government. Information had reached the Secretary in the autumn of 1799, that the wheat crop was deficient, and that the stock on hand was nearly exhausted. As the members of the Board had not then arrived in town, Mr Young, in November, wrote to Mr Pitt, advising that, without delay, measures should be taken to procure a large supply of rice from the East Indies. No notice, however, was taken of this timely warning. In March following the Board met, and the President (then Lord Carrington) sent a second letter to the Minister, urging still more strongly the same recommendation ; but unhappily almost with the same ill success. An agreement, indeed, was made between the Government and the East India Company, that the importation of rice should be permitted duty free ; but orders were at the same time transmitted to the servants of the Company, that none should be shipped on the Company's account ; and no hopes were held out that the Parliamentary bounty, which guaranteed a selling price of thirty-five shillings, would be continued. This bounty

\* Address to the Board in 1796.

would expire on the 2d of October, before the rice could arrive. The Board, however, did not desist from their patriotic exertions. They transmitted letters of enquiry to all parts of the kingdom; and having received answers which confirmed their worst fears, they once more represented to Ministers the critical situation of the country. After all, no change was made in the instructions sent to India; nor was any other remedy provided for the impending evil. At length the pressure of the scarcity became severe. The public was roused from its apathy. The King summoned Parliament with all haste to consider the most effectual means of relief. The recommendation of the Board, after a delay of nearly twelve months, was tardily adopted. The bill granting a bounty upon rice was renewed, and great encouragement held out for sending ships to India. Mean while the sufferings and privations of the people increased; wheat from the continent was imported at an enormous price; and it was only when the abundant harvest in 1801 rendered such aid unnecessary, that 19,000 tons of rice arrived from India.\* As Arthur Young observes, "Had the plan proposed by the Board been immediately adopted, L.2,500,000 might have been saved to the country."

One of the greatest obstacles to an increased cultivation of the kingdom has always been the necessity

\* See Lord Carrington's address to the Board in 1801.

of procuring a separate act of Parliament for the enclosure of each common :—a process tedious, expensive, and precarious. The Board, availing themselves of the general apprehensions caused by the scarcity in 1795, resolved upon improving the opportunity, by endeavouring to procure a general enclosure act ; and, as a preparatory measure, made enquiries to ascertain the amount of uncultivated land throughout the country. To the disgrace of a nation occupying a fertile region, jealous of its superiority over its neighbours, and abounding in capital as well as in enterprise, the amount of land abandoned by immemorial prescription to uselessness and desolation was twenty-two millions of acres.

On receiving these returns, Sir John Sinclair waited on Mr Pitt, and requested his assistance in carrying through some plan to remove this well-founded reproach.\* Mr Pitt replied, that nothing would give him greater satisfaction, although he feared the difficulties of such a measure would be insuperable. “ But,” continued the Minister, “ if you can prevail upon Mr Fox to lend his aid, I shall have no objection, loaded as I am with public business, to attend the committee, and see what can be done by our united exertions.” An interview immediately followed be-

\* “ Let us cut off those legal bars,  
Which crush the culture of our fertile isle ;  
Were they removed, unbounded wealth would flow,  
Our wastes would then with varied produce smile,  
And England soon a second Eden prove.”

tween the President and Mr Fox. After conferring nearly an hour, Mr Fox consented to become a member of a select committee, and to sound in the mean time such of his friends as were fittest and most likely to take a share in the business. He approved of the proposed regulations, but would not pledge himself to a particular opinion, till the subject had been fully discussed. Sir John was much gratified with the hope of bringing these two great political opponents together in the same committee, of which he himself was to be chairman, and by which so great a benefit to agriculture was likely to be secured.

In my father's anxiety for the success of his plan, he feared that Mr Fox's friends might dissuade him from fulfilling his engagement, and accordingly sent the following letter:—

“ Sir,

“ I hope this day to have the Committee on the waste lands appointed.

“ I am aware, from our late conversation on the subject, that you are not in any degree pledged to support the measures which the Committee may recommend, more especially if they should prove unpopular. It is extremely desirable that no doubt should be expressed at the outset of the business from so respectable a quarter, as to the expediency of some general measure, since otherwise attorneys and other parties interested in opposing the bill, may be encouraged

to raise a clamour against it, which, without the prospect of being supported in Parliament, they would not think of. The undertaking is bold and difficult, but, I am convinced, is not beyond the capacity of the Committee to be appointed. With great respect, I have the honour to be, &c.

“ Whitehall, 11th Dec., 1795.”

How far either of these political leaders was sincere in his professions cannot be determined, as Mr Fox, by not attending the Committee, released the other from his pledge. It may, however, be observed, that since great hostility to the measure was felt in various quarters, and since much odium might be expected against its supporters, Mr Pitt was justified in stipulating that the responsibility should be shared by his rival.

Thus deprived of the assistance he had confidently anticipated from the two great party leaders, the President had recourse to various friends, clergymen as well as lawyers, with whose aid a bill was drawn up and corrected, embracing provisions just and equitable towards all parties. A long letter is before me upon the subject from Bishop Watson, commenting on certain hints and suggestions furnished by Judge Buller in reference to the measure. The Bishop wished for a general commutation of tithes, as well as a general enclosure bill, but he was anxious, that, while the latter measure was in progress, the former

should be postponed. He remarked that both objects might be lost, if too much were aimed at ; and that the Legislature was not yet prepared for so great a change in the tithe system as a permanent or compulsory commutation.

The bill thus concocted was so unexceptionable, that it passed triumphantly through the Commons. Some opposition in the House of Lords was anticipated from Lord Chancellor Rosslyn. Sir John, therefore, urged his Lordship to permit the second reading, and then suggest in the Committee such amendments as he thought necessary. " At any time," says he, writing to the Chancellor, " the rejection of a bill, purporting to be an act for promoting the cultivation and improvement of the waste lands of the kingdom, would not be well received by the public ; but disappointment in the present state and temper of the times would necessarily occasion infinite disgust. I have already received letters from respectable quarters, in the apprehension of such a circumstance, stating the astonishment of the writers, that when taxes were rapidly accumulating every day, measures calculated for the improvement of the country were either neglected or thrown aside." This appeal was ineffectual. The bill, on the second reading, was thrown out, chiefly through the influence of the very man whom the President had been endeavouring to propitiate. On this occasion my father received the following letter from Sir John Call, the

Treasurer of the Board, expressive of the surprise and indignation excited generally among the landed interest.

— Whiteford House, July 19.

— My dear Sir.

— I learnt from my newspaper with great astonishment, and with equal concern, that your enclosure bill was put by in the House of Lords on the motion of the Lord Chancellor, without one single argument against it, at least according to the report in my paper. I know not to what motive I can impute this, but I fear the loss of office in that House, and perhaps in ours too, have an influence they ought not to have, against a great public measure.

Whatever may be the cause, I hope the Board of Agriculture, in another session, will resume the business with zeal and perseverance; and that, supported by societies in every county, and by the numerous parties who have already petitioned in favour of the bill, they will form such a combination of interests, as the legislature must attend to. I will not say all that I could on this subject, because I am somewhat out of temper: but I cannot help thinking it to be an act of great injustice to individuals, as well as a counteraction of an obvious improvement in agriculture and all its relative advantages, to prevent the owners and occupiers of waste and common land from enclosing such lands by common consent, and in



order to amend the soil and increase the produce. I am, my dear sir, with great esteem, your faithful and obliged servant,

“ J. CALL.”

Other letters to the same effect poured in upon the President from all quarters. I am amused with the following, from an intelligent agriculturist in the north of England. “ The failure of your most excellent intended general enclosure bill,” says Mr Bird of Appleby (22d May, 1798), “ is still greatly to be regretted, as it most probably would, if passed into a law, have been the most beneficial to this country of any act since Magna Charta. And it is astonishing to me what could induce the Lord Chancellor to dismiss the bill, as his profession must exclude him from having a competent knowledge of agricultural affairs.”

The Board was not disheartened by this defeat, but continued their exertions in the great cause of extended cultivation. Next year Sir John Sinclair wrote a second time to the Chancellor, informing him that Lord Thurlow and Lord Kenyon had promised their assistance in framing a new bill, but his Lordship was again impracticable. During the severe scarcity in 1800, the Board redoubled their efforts, and produced a bill satisfactory to the landed interest, and not injurious to the church ; but the law authorities in the Upper House contrived to alter so completely

one of its leading provisions, that the agriculturists themselves withdrew it. Having sustained a defeat under circumstances so favourable, the mover (Lord Carrington) gave up the cause as hopeless. "If," said he, "after the fatal experience of more than twenty millions sterling having been sent to foreign countries for the purchase of grain within the short space of a few years, noble lords will still condemn millions of acres, which are capable of every kind of produce, to remain dreary wastes, I can impute it to little less than a species of infatuation. The case seems to me desperate; and I may almost say to them, in the forcible language of Scripture, 'Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' " \*

Notwithstanding the despondency here expressed, Sir John Sinclair, during the administration of Lord Sidmouth, had the satisfaction of carrying through an act which facilitated the object of the Board, by diminishing the expense of private bills. In a Committee of the whole House, one of the most interesting occasions to my father on which he had ever spoken, he urged very ably and eloquently, the paramount importance of agricultural improvement. He enumerated the obstacles presented by the existing system to the enclosure of waste land. He enlarged on the baneful effects of scarcities, which so often and

\* Address to the Board in 1803.

so recently had afflicted the kingdom ; he dilated on the necessity of providing for an augmented population, and of making the country independent of foreign nations for food ; concluding with this animated appeal—" We have begun another campaign against the foreign enemies of the country, and I rejoice to find, with every rational prospect of success. Why should we not attempt a campaign also against our great domestic foe, I mean the hitherto unconquered sterility of so large a proportion of the surface of the kingdom ? Let us try the effects of internal, as well as of foreign conquests. Let us not be satisfied with the liberation of Egypt, or the subjugation of Malta, but let us subdue Finchley Common ; let us conquer Hounslow Heath ; let us compel Epping Forest to submit to the yoke of improvement. These are conquests which will add to the strength and vital energy of the nation, and by them we shall be enabled to preserve those distant acquisitions, more splendid, it is true, though infinitely less substantial, than internal improvements ; but which, as a proof of valour, of enterprise, and of exertion, a great and spirited nation is naturally anxious to obtain." \* In reference to the expected accession of Irish members, in consequence

\* One day, after passing over Hounslow Heath, Sir John urged his friend, the Duke of Northumberland, to take measures for the enclosure and improvement of that extensive tract, which, to the disgrace of the country, had been suffered to remain in a state of nature. It is now covered with villas, or converted into gardens.

of the Union, he urged the House to speedy and energetic measures. "Let us resolve," he said, "to lay the foundation of a general system of improvement before the representatives of another nation can participate in the glory."

Notwithstanding the resolutions adopted by the House, the expense of private acts continued a serious obstacle to the extended cultivation of the country.\* My father's last attempt to accomplish his favourite object, was in 1812, when, as President of the Board, he drew up the sketch of a bill on the subject of enclosures, to be submitted to the House of Commons. In this sketch he proposed, that where the parties interested were unanimous, and where their rights were undoubted, they should be enabled to divide the land by an immediate agreement, or to appoint commissioners for that purpose. Where doubts existed as to the right of parties, it was intended that a

\* The following extract of a letter from William Payne, Esq. of Fritchley, near Doncaster, illustrates the importance of a new system, notwithstanding the above amelioration of the old:—"Without some general regulation we cannot go on, from the many impediments, owing to contested claims, &c. Indeed, when we do succeed in this *uphill* business, the expenses are so great, that we buy our land over again at more than its value. In one enclosure, on which I am materially concerned with a respectable neighbour of mine, Mr Bosville, the commissioners may probably be obliged to *sell the whole for expenses*. I am still in hopes that something may be effected to relieve this most crying grievance, by which the population of the county is unemployed and ill fed; than which a greater evil cannot exist in any state or nation."—31st May, 1812.

commission should be issued by the Chancellor to determine that question. Where the parties were not unanimous, it was proposed that the proprietors of two-thirds in value should be enabled to insist on an enclosure, by an application to the Judge of Assize, who, with the concurrence of the Grand Jury, should nominate commissioners from three lists to be delivered, one by the lord of the manor, one by the tithe-owner, and one by such a number of proprietors as possessed the major part in value of the land.

The following letters from Lord Chancellor Eldon show that, however favourably disposed towards the general principle of the measure, he was prepared to raise objections, almost insurmountable, against any specific plan.

“ Dear Sir John,

“ Having kept my bed from indisposition, I have not been able to write. Indeed I am very far from being able so to do.

“ If there is to be a general Enclosure-Bill, the great advocates first should compose the bill, and let the Government see how it is intended to be framed. The objections must arise from its details, and not from its general object. That object seems good; the details will be difficult. But they must be seen to be judged of; and unless some very able agriculturist, aided by some very able lawyer, particularly well versed in the rights, infinitely various, which men

have in real property in this country, will lay their heads together and produce something, to be diligently read, and diligently considered by agriculturists who are not lawyers, and by us lawyers who are no agriculturists, I think progress will not be rapid. If the Minister thinks it right to make it a government measure, and if you put a bill into his hands, I take for granted it would be submitted to the consideration of legal advisers. But I think some two such persons, as I have alluded to, must together compose the bill. I meant to write you a long letter upon this important object, but I am too ill to proceed, having been lifted out of bed, and I feel quite incirried, having the gout in severity. Yours very truly.

“ ELDOX.”

- Dear Sir John,

-- I was honoured with your letter a day or two before I left town at the close of ten months, during all which I have devoted day and night to the duties of my office and station. I am very well aware, Sir John, of the magnitude and importance of the measure you mention; but whatever aid I may be able to give to any bill for carrying such a measure into effect, which shall have been prepared and settled before it comes into Parliament by some very able lawyer, skilful enough, as such, to clothe in legal language the plans, which such persons as yourself and others,

conversant in the nature of the measure itself, may suggest, as far as he can execute them consistently with a due regard to the rights of property, it is utterly impossible for me to devote any part of my time to the subject, previous to its appearing in Parliament in the shape of a bill. The very few weeks of vacation which I have I must sacrifice to purposes connected with my health, and to them only; and, as to my being able in November to take upon myself the duty you propose to me, with an absolute inability to execute three-fourths of the duties of my judicial office, I cannot abstract from those duties one moment of my time. If I am, therefore, to be of any use, it can only be by considering the bill, when it shall have been drawn and matured into something that looks like a complete measure by some eminent lawyer conversant in drawing acts of Parliament, and who, when so employed, is not devoting his leisure hours to the subject, but is, in truth, employed in the regular course of his professional business. I am, dear sir, with sincere regard, yours truly,

“ ELDON.

“ Encombe, Corfe Castle, Sept. 4, 1812.”

“ Dear Sir John,

“ I have just received your bill, to which I shall pay the utmost attention.

“ One of the things which has caught my eye, and which is utterly *inadmissible*, is the trial, *in the Court*

had, for instance, the last day of petitions, in causes of lunacy and bankruptcy, more than five hundred petitions.

“How is it possible to consent to an enactment which, if it had existed previous to the vacation, I will venture my life, would have brought the Court to the conclusion of its sittings before any, or at least most of these very important matters could have been heard at all ?

“You must form some distinct Court for this duty. I have lost no time in apprising you of this, because it seems convenient that it should be early communicated. When the Court is utterly, absolutely, unequal to its present functions, are its duties to be increased by the addition of what in no sense naturally belongs to it as a Court ?

“Yours very truly,

“ELDON.

“P.S.—I presume your reason for setting down the exceptions *on the next day* of petitions is speedy hearing ; but if the act don't require it to be heard before those which stand before it, there may be no such hearing ; if the act does that, it does gross injustice to the suitors. But I object to any new duties being imposed upon a Court which cannot execute its present duties. Excuse haste.”

Among the greatest disappointments experienced



by my father throughout his long and active life, was the ill success of all his plans for a general enclosure bill, and especially the rejection of the original bill, to which, as I have mentioned, the consent of the House of Commons had been obtained. Reverting to the subject many years afterwards, he frequently described the alternations of hope and fear which he had continually undergone during the tedious discussions of sixteen years. "When I first conceived the idea," he used to say, "I could hardly venture to hope that an individual, unconnected with party, would be enabled to confer so great a benefit upon his country. When I carried my committee, and still more, when I had gained a triumph in the Commons, I conceived that the great object of my life was secured, and that I had done to agriculture the greatest service that one man could do. Judge, then, of my vexation and disappointment when, without one argument against it, this great measure was superciliously put aside."

Although the Board was never able to carry through a general enclosure act, yet they caused a great increase in the number of private enclosure bills, both by facilitating their enactment and by awakening a spirit of improvement throughout the kingdom. During twenty years previous to the establishment of the Board, the number of enclosure bills was only 749 ; during twenty years after its establishment, the number amounted to 1883, giving an increase of 1134

bills, and, according to the best estimates, producing 2,268,000 acres of additional cultivation.

Another important subject to which the Board directed its attention, was that of bringing all the weights and measures throughout the kingdom under the summary jurisdiction of the magistrates. The poor, especially in rural districts, had formerly been subjected to the grossest frauds by petty dealers. At the request of the Board, Mr Powys introduced a bill to remedy the evil. Thousands of those humble sufferers from imposition had reason to thank the Board of Agriculture for suggesting this statute.\*

Various measures also were carried by the influence of this public-spirited body for removing taxes, which, though of little benefit to the Exchequer, were injurious to agriculture, by raising the price of articles important to the cultivation of the soil, or to the improvement of stock. The tax on draining tiles, amounting almost to a prohibition, was removed; and lintseed and rape cake, imported in British vessels, were exempted from the payment of duty. "This exemption," says Arthur Young, "had its origin with the Board; and it now appears almost incredible, that, in a country such as this, suffering under a scarcity of provisions, so preposterous a duty should have been suffered to remain on the statute-books—a duty calculated to prevent the importation of that

\* Address to the Board in 1795. Appendix L. p. 61.

“ Q. S. P., 13th July, 1797.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your commands in relation to the *poor* will be fulfilled ;—to speak the truth, they have been anticipated. I have been thinking of nothing else but poverty for these seven or eight months—*paupertatis nihil a me alienum puto*. That, which for inducement was not necessary, may in the way of encouragement be useful ; and, in the way of encouragement, what can be more stimulative than flattery from Sir John Sinclair ?

“ My labours, taking them all together, will, I doubt, be too voluminous to look for the honour of a complete admission into the *fasti* of the Board. But extracts can be made, adapted to the questions by which your commands to me on that subject are conveyed. Believe me ever, with all respect,

“ Dear sir,

“ Your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ JEREMY BENTHAM.”

I shall not expatiate on the various plans suggested and matured by this patriotic association, for improving turnpikes, for regulating stage-coaches and wheel-carriages, and for diffusing generally throughout the kingdom valuable processes of husbandry peculiar to certain districts. The general reader cannot be expected to take an interest in details which, how-

ever important in themselves, are too technical to be understood, without tedious explanation.

To these direct and palpable advantages of the Board, must be added those good effects which it indirectly and silently produced, by stirring up throughout the country a zeal for agricultural improvement; a zeal not extinguished even with the institution which first kindled it. No doubt some eminent individuals had previously directed their attention to husbandry, and some farming societies were exerting a beneficial influence in their respective districts. But those individuals exerted themselves with far greater energy, and those societies increased tenfold in number, after the Board, by its example, had pointed out the great results to be effected by public spirit, energy, and perseverance. Agriculture, in the eyes of all classes, rose to a dignity and importance which it would not otherwise have reached, and persons of the highest rank, of the largest property, and of the greatest intellectual endowments, were proud to take the lead among practical agriculturists.\*

\* The following passage, with reference to the general usefulness of the Board, occurs in Bisset's History of the Reign of George III., vol. v. p. 367 :—"Agriculture has never occupied a share of legislative attention proportioned to its momentous value as a branch of political economy, since Britain became so eminent for manufactures and commerce. This is an omission, the consequences of which have been often fatally experienced, from recurring scarcities in a country, by the fertility of its soil, and the talents of its people, so adapted for securing plenty. An evil so frequent was naturally the subject of reiterated complaint ;

In what degree this generous ardour in the cause of husbandry and internal improvement was fostered and matured by the exertions and example of the Founder of the Board of Agriculture, may be seen by

but no effectual measures were employed to prevent it from often occurring again. Among the many ardent enquirers into political economy, one of the most active and indefatigable, whom an age supremely addicted to such studies has produced, is Sir John Sinclair. This gentleman, of a vigorous and acute understanding, enriched with knowledge and methodized by erudition, had bestowed great industry of research on various branches of political philosophy. He had traced, investigated, and presented to the public, the history of the revenue. In the progress of his pursuits, agriculture presented itself to him as an object most deserving of promotion. He saw that very much remained to be done ; but before he could set about propositions of improvement, he thought it wisest and most expedient to ascertain the facts ; and therefore sought information where useful information was most likely to be found. In Scotland, his native country, he applied himself to the clergy, the best informed of any class of men of fixed rural residence, and addressed certain queries to the members of that numerous and respectable body. These queries, embracing the physical, moral, religious, and political situation of the respective parishes, in the result of the answers, produced an immense body of statistical knowledge, especially on pastoral and agricultural subjects. He afterwards, less systematically and extensively, executed, through different means, a similar plan in England. He advanced, however, so far as to ascertain a general fact of the very highest importance—that, though in some particular districts improved methods of cultivating the soil are practised, yet, in the greater part of these kingdoms, the principles of agriculture are not yet sufficiently understood, nor are the implements of husbandry, or the stock of the farmer, brought to that perfection of which they are capable. To promote so desirable a purpose, Sir John Sinclair projected the establishment of “ *A*

*From Sir Humphrey Davy.*

“ Jan. 6, 1809.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am much obliged to you for the important document you had the kindness to send to me.

“ Amongst the various monuments of patriotism which you have raised, and for which posterity will bless you, this will not be one of the least useful. It is surprising that it should be so much more easy to make men attend to their pleasures than their interests ; yet, till within the last fifty years, agricultural economy was a dead letter. I hope you will live to see England independent of all foreign supplies. I can hardly conceive a greater or a more grateful triumph for you.

“ We are going on with the plan for the Royal Institution, and I trust it will become, with the assistance of the dignified and patriotic characters of the country, a great and permanent establishment. I am, dear sir, with the highest respect, your obliged servant,

“ H. DAVY.”

*From His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence.*

“ Bushy, Nov. 20, 1801.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I heartily agree with you that this country

the following letters from the author on Rural Affairs; from a learned man from a late distinguished philosopher, illustrious personage, whose name is connected with the nation, and interesting to every student. Writing to Sir John Brown says—"He has brought our country into action, as well as acted on the thought of."

ce, make me not the school of the first man of husbandry, being one of your most devoted me, dear sir, yours

"WILLIAM."

"Bushy-House, Feb. 22, 1827.

Professor

who has

any one

agric

he

sp

the kind expressions you use in your letter towards myself: and wish, from the bottom of my heart, I had been of that real use to our country that your worthy self has been, and most particularly, at the head of the Board of Agriculture. I remain yours, unalterably,

"WILLIAM."

The usefulness of this great central Institution radiated to the remotest dependencies of the British crown. In Bengal, the chief agricultural deficiency had always been the scanty support for cattle and

horses. On the suggestion of the Board, Lucerne and Guinea grass were tried with success. I find the Court of Directors, in a despatch to Marquess Wellesley, the Governor-General, expressing their satisfaction at the prospect of these productions becoming "an invaluable acquisition to the Bengal provinces." I have not hitherto been able to ascertain how far this expectation has been realized. An eminent botanist, however, informs me that he received, some time ago, good specimens of Lucerne from Calcutta, though he was not aware, till I informed him, how the plant had been introduced. The Board likewise caused experiments to be made in the cultivation of potatoes and of hemp in the East Indies. For the improvement also of the West Indies, they transmitted a collection of seeds from Sumatra to Jamaica and St Vincent. This collection proved so acceptable, that the House of Assembly in the former island passed a vote of thanks to the donors. The Board was also the means of introducing into those islands that important article of shipbuilding, the teak tree.\* I have much satisfaction in adding, that the West India body, both collectively and individually, took every opportunity to express their gratitude to Sir

\* See Arthur Young's lecture to the Board, pp. 58, 59. In the communications to the Board, vol. iv. p. 277, a fact is mentioned, which shows the rapid growth of teak wood in the West Indies. A seed planted at Barbadoes in 1799, measured, in 1803, twenty-five feet in height, having grown at the rate of above six feet per annum.



John for his various exertions to promote colonial agriculture.

The President was able to be more useful in this foreign department, by securing the assistance of numbers, for whom he had procured situations in the colonies. To those who expressed gratitude for his patronage, his usual answer was, that all the return he asked would be to receive from them information or productions that might be useful to husbandry, either in other distant settlements or at home.

The interest taken in the proceedings of the Board was fully as great in all parts of continental Europe as in Great Britain itself. I have already noticed, that M. Otto, the French ambassador from the Consular Government, applied, in 1800, to the President for a list of such works relating to agriculture as were most likely to promote the internal improvement of France. While complying with this request, Sir John enclosed copies of a paper which he had then recently drawn up on experimental farms, together with some plans of circular cottages, and of a country village. His plan and papers were submitted to the National Institute, which appointed two of its own members, Messieurs Tessier and Cels, to examine and report upon them. These eminent savans not only gave a highly favourable report, but took occasion to express, in strong terms, their admiration of Sir John Sinclair's exertions in the general cause of humanity. The Institute voted him their thanks,

and ordered his communications to be printed and circulated among the members.\* M. Tessier, in other instances, was quite eloquent in his eulogies of the Board. "True citizens," said he, "men who judge wisely, the cordial friends of France, cannot see, without a noble jealousy, England forming a Board of Agriculture. There is not a wise man, and a friend of humanity, who will not applaud with me operations so well concerted and so promptly executed." A number of my father's works were either abridged, as I have already noticed, in the *Bibliothèque Britannique*, or translated entire into various continental languages. He received diplomas from many of the philosophical, and from almost all the agricultural societies of Europe; he carried on an extensive correspondence, not only with Tessier above-named, but with Lasteyrie, Silvestre, Maurice, Pictet, Hertzberg, D'Einsiedel, Voght, Edelcrantz, Hauterive, and other noted patrons of his favourite science; he was, moreover, in the habit of receiving visits from foreign students of agriculture, who anxiously consulted him on the subject, having come from the most opposite

\* Vide "Mémoires présenté à l'Institut des Sciences, Lettres et Arts, par divers savans, et lus dans les Assemblées des Sciences Mathématiques et Physics. Tome premier. Paris: Baudouin, imprimeur de l'Institut, 1806." The leading article is entitled, "Projet d'un plan, pour établir des fermes expérimentales, et pour fixer les principes des progrès de l'Agriculture; par Sir John Sinclair, Bart., &c. &c. Le 11 Messidor, An 8.

extremities of Europe, from Finland or Calabria, from Volhynia or Andalusia.

Nor was America less alive than Europe to the benefits resulting from this rich and varied storehouse of agricultural knowledge. Washington recommended an American Board of Agriculture, constructed on the plan of that in England. And although a national establishment of this nature was not founded for the whole union, yet his suggestion was adopted by the State of New York, which, in 1819, appropriated out of the public treasury 10,000 dollars annually for the improvement of husbandry. The success of this institution is universally acknowledged in America. An intelligent country gentleman, of the state just mentioned, G. W. Featherstonehaugh, Esq. of Duanesburgh, thus writes to my father: "In promoting agriculture, we have imitated Great Britain, as in many of her other prominent arts and sciences; and these interesting circumstances give additional strength to that natural bond between the two countries, arising from family connexions, similarity of language, mode of living, customs, &c., which, I trust, will always unite them in the successful pursuit of all those objects which tend to render human life dignified and desirable."

To give some idea of the confidence with which foreign agriculturists relied upon the judgment and philanthropy of Sir John Sinclair, I may here introduce a few specimens, such as first occur to me, of

the requests, queries, and suggestions transmitted to him from all parts of the world, and, in many instances, by persons whom he had never seen or heard of. Major Stjernsward asks advice as to the proper method of improving ten thousand acres of rich land in Egenholm in Sweden. M. Collett, of Christiania, offers an account of his experiments at Ullevold in Norway for insertion among the transactions of the Board. M. Ankar, of Copenhagen, enquires how noblemen from Denmark may obtain instruction in British agriculture. The Chevalier Buckhardt of Bavaria desires to have a list of English works on husbandry, particularly on the breeding of sheep and horses. M. Von Hoffen of Idolsberg, in Austria, solicits information with respect to thrashing-machines and distillation. M. de Liebistor, President of the Agricultural Society at Berne, wishes to know the rules adopted by the Board with respect to the reward of merit. M. Fellenberg of Hofwyl offers to exchange Swiss for British implements of husbandry. M. Serwinski of Biala, near Warsaw, offers to send a "socha," or Lithuanian plough, for trial in Great Britain. Count Zenobio of Venice, asks for specimens of Shetland rams, and offers rams from Pavia in return. Mr Robert Sinclair of Baltimore, in Maryland, describes minutely the soil and situation of his Transatlantic farm, and enquires the best rotation of crops and instruments of tillage. Lastly, Mr William

Dunn, of East Florida, is desirous of information as to the style of culture most adapted to a sandy soil.

The period during which Sir John Sinclair presided over the Board of Agriculture was in all thirteen years. He had solicited its establishment as the reward of his public services ; but after he had, during five years, discharged the duties of his office, laboriously and without emolument, or rather at great private expense, he was suddenly displaced through the influence of Mr Pitt. That Minister appears to have become jealous of the general popularity and influence with the landed and farming interest acquired by the President and Founder, who, he perhaps conceived, was acting too independently of ministerial dictation. However this may be, at the instance of Lord Chancellor Rosslyn, he set up Lord Somerville in opposition to Sir John Sinclair, and exerted all the influence of his Government in favour of the new candidate. Lord Somerville, who had, at his own request, been admitted by Sir John a member of the Board, came forward with great reluctance, and only after receiving notice, that if he declined another competitor would be found, or the Board extinguished.

On the day of election, a somewhat extraordinary scene occurred. The official members, whose connexion with the establishment was merely nominal, who had never attended its meetings, and who were ignorant of its interests and operations, made their first appearance in the apartments of the Board

for the very equivocal purpose of displacing their venerable and patriotic founder. In justice to several individuals, it may be stated, that they were above being influenced by ministerial solicitations. The Archbishop of York (Dr Markham), in particular, wrote to my father, that he had been applied to by the Minister to vote against him, but that he would not be "made a tool of to do a dishonourable act." Most of the ordinary members were faithful to their leader, with whose efficiency they were made acquainted by their discharge of their own duties. Sir Joseph Banks was an exception, but he afterwards wrote a letter, apologizing for his defection, and expressing his hope that this circumstance would cause no interruption of their future friendship.\* Mr Fane, member for Oxfordshire, wrote to assure Sir John, that if he "was alive he would attend the Board to support him." The result, however, was unfavourable; the official members prevailed, and Lord Somerville, by a majority of only one, was elected.

Letters, expressive of astonishment, regret, and even disgust, were addressed from all quarters to Sir John Sinclair by the friends of agriculture, who foreboded

\* "I hope," concludes Sir Joseph, "we shall meet together at the club, and talk over all matters that concern us, either as members of the Board, or fellows of the Royal Society, as they may in their turns present themselves to our minds. Believe me, my dear sir, with real esteem and regard, very faithfully yours,

"J. BANKS."

ill to the Board from the loss of his superintendence. Bishop Watson enlarges on the "shamelessness of his dismissal," and on the blame belonging to those honorary voters "who," he says, "condescended to turn you out at the instance of the Minister." Warren Hastings, in his retirement at Daylesford, hearing of this event, expressed an emotion which does him honour. Writing to my father, he says, "I read some time since, with great sorrow, that the Board, which owes its origin to your fostering hand, and had attained under it so great a degree of improvement, was deprived of your services. Still, if it should continue to be prosecuted with a portion of that zeal which has hitherto animated its researches (which I much doubt), yours will be the prime merit of all its future successes; and if it falls into neglect, even the point at which it began to fail will serve for a memorial of the spirit of its institutor." The following letter of the first Marquess of Lansdowne is expressive of the same sentiments.

" Berkeley Square, 4th June, 1798.

" Dear Sir,

" Though I am very much recovered from a tedious illness which detained me at Bath, I am not well enough to pay visits, else my first would be to you, to express my surprise and concern at your being no longer President of the Board of Agriculture. If

it succeeds in other hands, the honour of the Institution will be always yours ; if it falls off, it will add to the public regret, while I have no doubt your activity and public spirit will always find a road to fresh distinction.

“ I am forbid to see much company, but if you do me the honour to call here any day before two o'clock, you will be sure to find my door open. I am, dear sir, your faithful humble servant,

“ LANSDOWNE.”

Many other communications to the same effect are now before me, but I shall only quote a letter from His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. “ I always thought the removal of so enlightened a President as yourself from the Board of Agriculture shameful ; and the letter I now return you proves how much harm has accrued to the country.” \*

Nor was it individuals unconnected with the Board, or the minority of the Board itself, who expressed to Sir John Sinclair their high sense of his services to the Institution. The Board, in its corporate capacity, passed a vote of thanks to him, which was communicated in the following letter of Lord Somerville, his successor.

“ Sir,

“ It is with the greatest pleasure that I execute

\* Letter dated Bushy Park, 7th Dec. 1803.



the request of the Board of Agriculture, to convey to you the unanimous thanks of that body, of which the following is an exact copy.

“ ‘ RESOLVED unanimously, that a letter, signed by the President, be sent to the late President, expressive of the thanks of the Board for his great attention to the duties of his office, while he presided at the Board, and for his great zeal to promote the objects of this Institution.’

“ Permit me to add, that I cordially unite in this idea, and am most truly yours,

“ SOMERVILLE, *President*.

“ Park Lane, May 14th, 1798.”

Towards his successor Sir John cherished sentiments of attachment and respect. They had much friendly intercourse ; and in the year 1819, when his Lordship died, Sir John took occasion publicly to express his sentiments in the following terms :—“ I have now the melancholy task of condoling with the agricultural world on the death of my much-lamented friend Lord Somerville. He was a character who did equal honour to the peerage and to the plough ; for, with the manners and the high spirit of his rank, he united all the useful and solid knowledge of a practical farmer. His name must ever be remembered with respect, while agriculture continues to hold its

proper station as the grand foundation of our national prosperity."

After an interval of eight years, the Founder of the Board of Agriculture was again elected President, to the great displeasure of his friend Bishop Watson, who felt indignant that he should again accept an office "from which he had been so shamefully dismissed; but which his zeal, his services, and talents so eminently qualified him to hold." My father continued President for seven years, during which period he received much encouragement and assistance from his friend Mr Perceval, the Prime Minister. That excellent statesman raised the grant to the Board for one year from L.3000 to L.5000; and when the Secretary to the Treasury objected, he sharply replied, "I wish most sincerely that all the money we vote was spent as usefully as this will be."

In 1813, the expensiveness of the situation, which had considerably reduced his private fortune, obliged the Baronet finally to resign his office.

I have already mentioned that King George III. entertained at first a lively interest in the proceedings of the Board, and was pleased to take under his patronage the Agricultural Survey of the kingdom. I have now, however, to relate a circumstance, which, though trivial in itself, may have caused his Majesty to regard the institution with less favour. It is well known that his Majesty was not only a friend to husbandry, but a practical agriculturist, and occupied

a large farm at Windsor, which he carefully and successfully superintended. His manager, Mr Kent, received the King's commands to appoint a day for the President and Secretary of the Board of Agriculture to inspect the royal farm. Whether the King meant to take them by surprise, or whether Mr Kent committed an oversight in not mentioning that his Majesty was to be of the party, is uncertain; but my father and Mr Young did not understand that any other person but Mr Kent was to meet them. On the day appointed, business occurred which made a journey to Windsor inconvenient, and they did not scruple to postpone their visit. Mean while his Majesty mounted his horse, and, in spite of fog and drizzling rain, proceeded to the farm, where he remained for some time expecting their arrival. This disappointment, although the circumstances were afterwards explained, left a disagreeable impression on his mind; and it was remarked, that his countenance from that period was not given as before to the Board of Agriculture.

From the period of the Baronet's resignation, the gloomy anticipations of Warren Hastings and Lord Lansdowne began to be realized. While the activity of the Board was declining, the odium against it continued to increase. Such became its feebleness, that the sum of L.2000 was actually returned to the Treasury, because no object, it was alleged, could be found on which that sum might be advantageously expend-

ed. The energetic Secretary, also, who had frequently lamented the supineness of individual members, and whose letters to his friend Sir John often repeated the complaint :—" We want active minds to come among us," or " the want of your vivifying presence makes every thing go on much slower," yielded at length to the infirmities of nature. After being blind for some years, he died in 1820.

By the death of Arthur Young, the Board lost an able functionary ; agriculturists a valuable example ; and society an excellent and religious man. He had long been an esteemed fellow-labourer with my father, who, at the request of the family, drew up an epitaph to commemorate his talents and virtues.

During the decline of the Board, the great crisis arrived of agricultural distress, which followed the last general peace. Many farming societies, discouraged by the pressure of the times, discontinued their operations. That the same fate should befall the National Board of Agriculture, was the wish of various parties. Many excellent clergymen retained their suspicions that the Board, by urging a commutation of tithes, betrayed hostility to the church. Many gentlemen of the law were apprehensive that the Board might at last accomplish that much dreaded measure—a general enclosure bill. No small portion of the farming classes joined in the cry ; and at a time when the ingenuity of the Treasury was continually at work, and wellnigh exhausted in devising

new imposts, they seriously imagined that the surveys of the kingdom, so zealously prosecuted by the Board, were intended as instruments of taxation. The lovers of good eating also, as historic truth compels us to record, went over to the ranks of the enemy. It was stated, not only in the House of Commons, but in numerous pamphlets and newspapers, that the great object of the Board was to bring meat to market so fat that nobody could eat it ; although, as Arthur Young argues, the Board never offered a single premium for cattle of such extraordinary obesity, and although it was obvious that what nobody would eat, nobody would rear or bring to market. Many influential parties, who had originally opposed the institution of the Board, either in the Cabinet or in Parliament, were little disposed to acknowledge services which impeached their own sagacity. Lord Liverpool, in particular, resolved, as Premier, to have the satisfaction of destroying that edifice, whose foundation, as a subordinate Minister, he had endeavoured to prevent. The scanty grant, which, under judicious management, had accomplished such mighty objects, was withdrawn. A faint attempt was made to sustain the tottering structure by private subscriptions, which, as appears from a letter to my father from the last President, the Earl of Macclesfield, were defective and ill paid. At last the premises in Sackville Street were disposed of, and the fortress dismantled, to which agriculturists had so long resorted for advice

and protection. The expiring act of the Board solicited the Government, "nothing loath," to take possession of its books and papers—those monuments of a zeal, industry, and intelligence, which a feeble Minister was incapable of appreciating. Many years afterwards, the Author of these Memoirs, visiting the Tower of London, was shown, in the Record-office, a huge solid mass of documents; and on enquiring the nature of this mighty accumulation, was answered, "These are the papers of the Board of Agriculture."

Such was the fate of an institution of which Lord Lansdowne affirmed, in the House of Lords, that "its establishment was the only good exertion of Mr Pitt's Administration"—an institution, of which that venerable patriot, King George III., declared that "he should consider every person who came forward with his assistance to its transactions, as contributing importantly to the good of his country"—an institution of which M. Tessier, the great French agriculturist, affirmed, that "there was not a wise man, and a friend of humanity, who would not applaud with him operations so well concerted, and so promptly executed." †

How far the wonderful and unprecedented increase

\* See Arthur Young's Lecture.

† See *Annales de l'Agriculture Française*, No. 7. Communications to the Board of Agriculture, vol. i. p. 386.

of tillage, within the last half century, is owing, directly or indirectly, to the exertions of the Board of Agriculture, cannot of necessity be ascertained. The impartial reader may solve the question for himself, by means of the facts and authorities above advanced. Certain it is, however, that even the strides of manufactures and commerce, wide and rapid as they have been, have scarcely kept pace with the progress of rural industry. In no country of the world, at no period of history, have results so stupendous been exhibited—results which affect not merely the strength and happiness of Great Britain, but which, in various ways, may contribute prospectively to the well-being of the remotest countries, and most distant times. In consequence of discoveries made in husbandry, and of the enterprise and perseverance which adopted and applied them, a territory containing, about the middle of the last century, a population of only seven millions and a half, is now inhabited by more than seventeen millions. All this vast multitude have been for several years rendered independent of foreign supplies; while, at the same time, they are fed more abundantly, and on more nutritious food, than the smaller population of preceding ages. The New World, in its juvenile freshness and vigour, with its gigantic magnitude, its unbounded resources, and untiring industry, may present a spectacle as magnificent; but, to use the words of a high authority,

“ the history of the world may be ransacked in vain for a parallel instance of improvement in any old and settled country.” \*

\* See Edinburgh Review, No. 126.



are eager to guide, and none willing to follow. Each is inordinately attached to his own opinions ; and, when these are not adopted, he takes offence, and withdraws himself. Sir John saw the absolute necessity of regularly formed parties in a complicated government like ours ; and frequently declared, that if the House of Commons consisted solely, or even principally, of men acknowledging no leader—men proceeding on no fixed principles of union, the business of the nation must soon be at a stand. Lord Melville used to express this sentiment very pointedly in his favourite toast, “ a strong Administration, and a firm Opposition.”

Among my father's private memoranda I find a curious paper, describing the state of parties while Mr Addington was in power. Exclusive of minor sections, they amounted to no less than seven, namely, the friends of the King and his Minister, occupying a central position, with those of Mr Pitt, Lord Melville, and Lord Grenville on the one hand, and on the other those of the Prince of Wales and Mr Fox. In the King's party were included many members of both Houses, who, from motives of personal esteem, of private interest, or of political expediency, were anxious to support the government of George III., whoever might be his Counsellors. The Grenville party, or New Opposition, took the lead in the attack upon the Minister, and received occasional support from Mr Pitt, who, at the same time, maintained

privately a connexion with several members of the Cabinet, in particular with Mr Addington, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Castlereagh. So eager were the Grenvilles for the return of Mr Pitt to office, that they affirmed any man to be a public enemy who kept him out ; “ a strange declaration,” observes Sir John, “ considering who the person is that can alone replace him.” Lord Melville, it was understood, would carry with him about thirty members if he joined the Administration. The friends of the Prince of Wales, headed by Lord Moira, were a numerous body, but their real strength did not appear, as his Royal Highness would not at that time take an active part in politics.

Assailed by powerful enemies on both sides, the Ministry could hardly attend to any thing but their own preservation—they could not venture upon the vigorous and decisive measures necessary at so critical a juncture for the public safety. They could not even stand without additional support. Sir John conceived that the most natural addition to their strength would be the friends of the Prince of Wales. He wrote, accordingly, to Mr Bragge, a relation of the Premier, suggesting that Lord Moira should be invited to take office. He urged that the noble Lord would not only, by his talents for public speaking, be a powerful supporter in the Upper House, where a fit antagonist to Lord Grenville was much wanted, but would also, by his military experience, his politi-

cal connexions, and his influence with the heir-apparent, contribute to the vigour and stability of the Administration.

In the mean time, the Baronet had prepared the way for the intended accession to the Cabinet, by writing to his noble friend, from whom he received an answer not unfavourable to the project.

*Letter from the Earl of Moira.*

“ Donington, Dec. 2, 1801.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ All that you say of the feebleness of the present Administration, both with regard to Parliamentary support and to general opinion through the country, is perfectly just. It is clear, that in a moment of such infinite exigency as the present, Government cannot go on upon such precarious terms. There are many public circumstances, the pressure of which must be immediately answered; and if they cannot (as is beyond hope) be satisfactorily encountered, the people should at least have the notion that the embarrassment arises from the nature of the difficulties themselves, and not from inadequacy of skill in those who manage affairs. The latter supposition would affect more than the Administration; and, in the qualmish state of public disposition, would operate mischievously against our form of government. It is probable that Mr Addington will cast about to

strengthen himself. He is an honourable and an amiable man ; with, I believe, many just and manly principles respecting the execution of the trust reposed in him. Of course, there could not be, *in limine*, any objection to such a junction as you indicate. Ulterior points would possibly be difficult to settle. The opening which you exhibit for communication has been anticipated by a discussion of the Premier's situation, which took place long since ; and, I trust, something has been matured for extricating his Royal Highness from a position intended to lower him in the estimation of the country. Thank Heaven, it has had the very contrary effect ; but he has suffered under it in his personal feelings too long. Perhaps I may run up to town in a few days, but it is doubtful.

“ I have the honour, my dear Sir John, to be, very faithfully, yours,

“ MOIRA.

“ Sir J. Sinclair, Bart.”

I need hardly inform the reader that this negotiation failed. Mr Addington could not venture upon a step which would have brought him nearer to the Whig party, or Old Opposition, and would have estranged him altogether from Mr Pitt. His situation is depicted in a very lively manner by various correspondents of my father, out of whom I select his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, and Mr Tyrwhitt, M.P. Secretary to the Prince. “ Had

this country," says the Duke, "an able and active Administration, I should be afraid of nothing: but, in my opinion, our Ministers, and even the country, want energy, which I will endeavour to give it in every debate we shall have in Parliament. I am ready either for the Cabinet or the fleet; but I have no reason to expect either situation, and must, therefore, do all the good I can in Parliament; and, if the invasion does take place, I shall have the honour of attending his Majesty, if permitted." \*

A subsequent letter has these words:—"As for politics, you never heard me say I thought the present Administration efficient, and without doubt Lord Hobart is the worst of all. But I see no likelihood of a change; where Pitt goes against Addington, there Fox will support Ministers; and Fox will oppose Government in those measures which Pitt will approve. In short, if these champions could unite, they would not carry one hundred members out of six hundred and fifty-eight. The crown, the union with Ireland, and above all, the dread of the times, will, in my opinion, prevent a change of men. Certainly Lord Moira ought to be brought forward, and I wish the overtures of the Prince of Wales had not been rejected." †

Mr Tyrwhitt expresses similar sentiments in a strain of characteristic jocularity. "Rumour says

\* Dated Bushy House, June 29, 1803.

† Letter, dated Bushy House, Oct. 18, 1803.

the House of Commons, and having been more accustomed to hear and to act than to harangue and to disturb. If the son of my old friend Chatham, instead of having been brought from Eton school to govern a great nation, had been nursed, like Addington, or bred up in the school of adversity like the old cock his father, he would have been in a more enviable and honourable situation, and certainly in a more useful one than he is or can be at present."

Sir John Sinclair and his political friends had agreed, as we have seen, in approving the peace of Amiens ; but the insatiable ambition of the First Consul, who maintained his armies on a war establishment, and acted as the dictator of the continent, adding new territories to his dominions without scruple or apology, made it clear to them that the treaty of Amiens was a dangerous armistice, rather than a settled peace. The following extract from a letter of the Duke of Clarence, shows that his Royal Highness, who took a lively interest in the politics of the times, concurred in this opinion.

" I am happy to see you think with me that war is better than the state we have been in since the *truce* (I will not call it the *peace*) of Amiens. I cannot help thinking war must be the event. In this case, and indeed in any other, the valuable and interesting paper respecting parties you sent me, will form a page in the history of the country.\*

\* The paper above described.

“ I shall now conclude with this sentiment—either a glorious and vigorous war, or an honourable and safe peace, which must secure to the King and the empire, *Malta imprimis* ; *no footing* in America to France ; *no foreign* possessions to be required by France, either of Spain, Portugal, or Holland ; *no more than a certain proportion of ships and troops* to be maintained by France in India ; and *last, though not least, no commercial agent*, or, in other words, no distinguished officers of the French artillery and engineers to be permitted by Great Britain to reside in her sea-port towns throughout the empire. I think we must, and do agree. Adieu.”

The sentiments of Lord Moira, to the same effect, are embodied in the following letter :—

“ Donington, Nov. 6, 1802.

“ Many thanks, my dear Sir John, for the printed Report which I yesterday received from you, as well as for your obliging letter. The publication is of a very useful nature.

“ I do not think any discussions are likely to arise, in the present moment, of consequence sufficient to make it worth your while to take your seat before Christmas. That we shall have war I firmly believe, but I am persuaded that Buonaparte, by the semblance of an accommodating disposition on the points in dispute, will protract the time of rupture till he

shall be better prepared to strike at our foreign possessions. The delay will not be above three or four months. In the mean while, an arrangement is in agitation, and will, I think, take place, by which Pitt is again to be Prime Minister. He is not to transact business with the King, but Addington (peer and Privy Seal) is to be charged with that function. Lord Westmoreland probably displaces Lord Hobart ; the Duke of Portland remains ; Lord Spencer, Lord Grenville, and Windham, not to be taken in. Such is the outline of a plan which certainly has been presented, and has been in some degree approved. You see what a jumble it is ; Lord St Vincent is vehement against it. It is possible I may soon see you. The Duc de Berri has proposed to visit me early in spring. I ought to make my bow to him, and I may probably arrange to make the jaunt with the Duke of Orleans, who has the same intention. I have the honour to be your faithful and obedient servant,

“ MOIRA.”

The coincidence of my father's sentiments with those of his above named friends, appears from a printed paper on the political state of Europe, drawn up by him, December 1803, for the consideration of a foreign statesman, high in office, with the pointed motto—“ *Nam tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet.*” In this document, which came out a few months after the renewal of hostilities, the author



enlarges on the happy state of Europe during the period of a just balance of power previous to the French Revolution. He then presents to view the dismal contrast in the aspect of affairs after this balance had been destroyed. He represents one country, with 500,000 warriors at her command, proudly intimating, that whoever ventured to dispute her will, must be conquered or destroyed. He points to a military despot forcing, by a tyrannical conscription, the whole youth of France, and of her allies, to be the instruments of his ambition, carrying on hostilities amidst all the horrors of winter, when, by the inclemency of the weather, greater numbers perished on both sides than by the sword of the enemy ; and, in his career of conquest, not confining his assaults to states and fortresses and armies, but waging war with all the moral and religious principles of mankind. France, he observes, is aiming at greatness by rapine and spoliation ; Britain, by the peaceful arts of commerce and industry. The former is provoking wantonly the enmity, the latter studies to obtain the friendship of her neighbours. France considers it her interest to make all other nations her tributaries and slaves ; Britain rests her welfare on their independence and security, labouring to promote their interests as zealously as her own. Opposed in single combat, the two countries could each maintain an unassailable position. The one would continue mistress of the sea, while the other ruled the continent. The conti-

mental powers must speedily unite with us against the common enemy; or, if they abandoned us in the hour of peril, they could have no claim upon our gratitude, when at last goaded by increasing tyranny into resistance, they tardily and selfishly solicited our intervention.

This paper excited much attention at the time, and the author was applied to by M. Mallet du Pan, for permission to translate it for circulation on the continent. The following is his letter on the subject:—

“ Monsieur le Chevalier,

“ Me trouvant effectivement à passer huit jours chez notre digne ami le Chevalier Macpherson, lorsqu’il reçut votre Essai sur la Situation Politique de l’Europe, je fus si frappé des vérités utiles qu’il renferma et du jour heureux sous lesquels elles sont présentées, que je le priai de vous demander la permission de me le remettre pour le traduire. Votre lettre du 14, Monsieur le Chevalier, est venue me l’accorder dans les termes les plus obligeans, et je vous dois des grâces sincères de m’avoir procuré la satisfaction sincère d’aider à faire connoître un ouvrage aussi plein de choses fortes, et de vues intéressantes.

“ Mes occupations d’office, et la crainte d’en retarder la completion, m’a empêché de rendre à cet essai toute la justice qu’il méritait : j’espère que vous voudrez bien en excuser l’imperfection.

casion quelques exemplaires de l'essai Français, j'en remettrais à plusieurs Ministres étrangers." \*

\* " Auditor's Office, January 21, 1804.

" Sir,

" Happening fortunately to be spending eight days with our worthy friend the Chevalier M'Pherson, when he received your Essay on the Political Situation of Europe, I was so struck by the useful truths which it contains, and the happy time of their appearance, that I begged him to ask your permission to forward it to me for translation. Your letter, sir, of the 14th, granted me that permission in the most obliging terms ; and I owe you my sincere thanks for having put it in my power to aid in the circulation of a work so full of sound sense and interesting information.

" My official occupations, and the fear of retarding its completion, have prevented me from doing your Essay the justice it deserves ; but I rely upon your goodness to pardon my imperfections.

" I have made use, sir, of the permission you gave me in your letter, to omit some expressions addressed to the Chief of the United States, rather than to the Continent. I have also softened and extended some paragraphs a little too *true* for the ears to which they are addressed ; and I have added some ideas which were suggested during my work, and which you are at liberty to repress *in toto*, if they seem to you superfluous. In general, knowing the jealous and envious spirit of the Continent, and the reproaches (sometimes well-founded) which it has levelled against our polemical authors, I have been very cautious in my expression of the sentiments which its conduct inspires. For I was aware that your reflections were chiefly designed for the perusal of Ministers and other statesmen.

" Permit me, sir, to express my delight at a circumstance which allows me to recall myself to your remembrance, and to assure you of the sentiments of respect with which I have the honour to be, sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

" TH. MALLET DU PAN.

" P.S.—If you could send me by any opportunity some

men, expressing, from day to day, their views of passing events, and stating, with the openness of familiar correspondence, their anticipations. Among my father's correspondents, there is none better fitted for this purpose than Bishop Watson—a man of powerful understanding and cool judgment.

In August, 1803, the Bishop (at the suggestion, as I believe, of my father) published anonymously his very able pamphlet, entitled “ Important Considerations for the People of Great Britain.” \* His object was to excite public hatred and indignation against the cruelty and ambition of the French Ruler ; and to depict, in the boldest colours, the horrors of subjugation by a tyrant so bloodthirsty and rapacious. Perhaps the miseries of a conquered people never were so powerfully described, as in the conclusion of this spirit-stirring composition.†

\* Printed for John Brown, Anchor Close, Edinburgh.

† The following is the passage referred to in the text:—

“ They ” (the French) “ remained but three months in Germany ; here they would remain for ever ; there their extortions and their atrocities were, for want of time, confined to a part of the people ; here they would be universal ; no sort, no part, no particle of property would remain unseized ; no man, woman, or child, would escape violence of some kind or other. Such of our manufactories as are moveable they would transport to France, together with the most ingenious of the manufacturers, whose wives and children would be left to starve ; our ships would follow the same course, with all the commerce and commercial means of the kingdom. Having stripped us of every thing, even to the stoutest of our sons, and the most beautiful of our daughters, over all that

what (which I dread) of Buonaparte, should hinder me."

" June 28th, 1804.

" My fears are not lessened since I left town. I have, however, more reliance on the volunteers than I had in my journey hither" (to Llandaff). " I saw at Preston, at Wrexham, and other places, some excellent bodies of them, well equipped and fit for service. The plan of the Emperor of the French is to try his strength with us by his fleet, at the same time that he invades us. One naval victory would endanger our existence—I say, endanger it; but I do not despair of our resistance by land. I know not what to say to the politics of Carlton House; I do not ap-

preserve which our fathers so often dyed the land and the sea with their blood? Shall we thus at once dishonour their graves, and stamp disgrace and infamy on the brows of our children? And shall we, too, make this base and dastardly surrender to an enemy, whom, within these twelve years, our countrymen have defeated in every quarter of the world? No; we are not so miserably fallen—we cannot, in so short a space of time, have become so detestably degenerate: we have the strength and the will to repel the hostility, to chastise the insolence of the foe. Mighty, indeed, must be our efforts, but mighty also is the meed. Singly engaged against the tyrants of the earth, Britain now attracts the eyes and the hearts of mankind; groaning nations look to her for deliverance—justice, liberty, and religion, are inscribed on her banners—her success will be hailed with the shouts of the universe, while tears of admiration and gratitude will bedew the heads of her sons who fall in the glorious contest."

prove of a son's opposing a father, or of an heir-apparent grasping the reins of government before his time; yet circumstances may arise, which would, in the estimation of the most dispassionate, not only excuse, but justify the present interference of the Prince of Wales; and I think so well of him, that I must believe such circumstances to have arisen."

" December 22, 1804.

" I am overwhelmed with fears for our existence as a nation. France will domineer over the world; we cannot attack her, and she need not attack us. Her menaces will destroy our finances, and excess of taxation will breed discontent. Adieu."

" December 26, 1804.

" I am not fond of referring every calamity to God's Providence inflicting punishment for our sins; yet I am less disposed to exclude his agency in the government of individuals and nations. We are afflicted with war; and I fear the pestilence of the Yellow Fever is proceeding towards us. I dread this contagion more than I do Buonaparte's invasion, and yet I am sufficiently alarmed by the expectation of that."

" 29th October, 1805.

" You know more of politics than I do; but I am more and more convinced of the truth of the fol-

lowing sentence, which was in the speech I made in the House in March last year:—‘ The die, my Lords, is in the air, which, by its fall, will indicate the ruin of Buonaparte or of Britain, which will indicate the consequent reduction of all the states of Europe under the military yoke of the French republic.’ ”

“ 7th of August, 1805.

“ You cannot well imagine how much I am alarmed at our present situation ; not indeed ultimately and individually alarmed, because my mind is made up to every thing. I can submit to every thing but dishonour, and it must be my own fault if I ever submit to *that*. Yet I have a sad presage that this country must succumb under the power of France ; all other nations are asleep, and they will not awaken till they are stunned by the hammers of despotism fastening Gallic chains around the necks of every people in Europe.”

“ June 12th, 1805.

“ I trouble not myself about politics ; the trade of Manchester is, I am told, at a stand ; a general stoppage of our commerce will be followed by a general bankruptcy ; and bankruptcy by our degradation as a state in Europe. You, Londoners, in the interim, are running mad after shows, and clinging so fast,

some to party and some to power, that you appear inapprehensive of danger."

" 1st February, 1806.

" I am very well pleased with the new arrangements ; but I fear our fate is fixed."

" May 7th, 1806.

" I am very much concerned to hear of Fox's indisposition ; he is an old statesman and a good Whig ; but unless France is ruined by itself, we cannot entertain much hope of escaping the general subjugation. Whether this *bouleversement* of civil politics, this abandonment of justice, this domination of ambition, is preparatory to a better state of things, to the introduction of a better belief, and a better practice of Christianity, I leave to be discussed by those who are more versed in the interpretation of prophecy than I am ; but the times are very extraordinary."

" 11th October, 1806.

" You know more of political occurrences than I do ; but my opinion concerning the expediency of peace is fixed. We *may* be ruined by it, but we *shall* be ruined without it. Adieu."

Soon after the return of Mr Pitt to power, an event occurred in which Sir John Sinclair was deeply



interested, from his long cherished friendship towards the individual principally concerned. In April, 1805, Mr Whitbread brought forward his charges against Lord Viscount Melville, then at the head of the Admiralty. A commission had been appointed by the Addington Administration to enquire into the alleged abuses in the naval department ; and a report was given in, impeaching the integrity of Lord Melville, of Mr Trotter, his paymaster, and of other persons employed by them, in pecuniary transactions. Mr Pitt recommended the appointment of a select committee to consider this report ; while the Opposition moved a series of resolutions, at once condemning the first Lord.

On this trying occasion, a number of members, usually supporters of the Government, deserted the unfortunate statesman. The Cabinet was divided. Mr Addington (now Viscount Sidmouth) was decidedly against him. Perhaps Mr Pitt, in his declining health, did not act with his usual energy. Popular feeling was, as usual, violently excited against the accused, by the mere hint of pecuniary malversation. Reasons for enquiry were inconsiderately and uncharitably confounded with substantial grounds of condemnation. Few had better opportunities of knowing thoroughly the character of Lord Melville than Sir John Sinclair. They had lived on terms of friendly intercourse from their first appearance on the political arena, and had been uniformly personal

dependent corporation ; who selected its ablest rulers, nearly doubled, in eighteen years, the value of its funds, and consolidated the mighty empire which Warren Hastings had preserved. It was Lord Melville, who, as Secretary at War, diffused a martial spirit over the country, and accumulated a military force sufficient to defy invasion. It was Lord Melville who made those benevolent arrangements in the naval service, which entitled him to the appellation of “ the Seaman’s best friend.” It was the courage and sagacity of this clear-headed Minister, which, in opposition to the feelings of his sovereign, and to the opinions of a large minority in the Cabinet, fitted out the expedition under Abercrombie to Egypt ; thereby leading to the victories of the Nile and Alexandria ; establishing the fame of British valour throughout Europe ; and encouraging other nations to hope for emancipation from the yoke of France.\*

Lord Melville was not only a sound statesman, but a powerful orator. A singular testimony to the latter fact is that of the famous Wilkes, so virulent an enemy to Tories and to Scotsmen. Conversing with my father on the prominent peculiarities of the leading

\* The expedition was resolved upon in the Cabinet by the smallest possible majority, and the King declared that he consented with the utmost reluctance to a measure which “ periled the flower of his army upon a distant and doubtful expedition.” His Majesty is understood to have afterwards magnanimously complimented Lord Melville on the success of an enterprise which he had himself opposed.

speakers in the House of Commons, "Fox," said he, "has most logic; Burke most fancy; Sheridan most real wit; Pitt excels in command of words and ingenuity of argument; but Dundas, with all the disadvantages of being a Scotsman, is our greatest orator. There is much sound sense, and no rubbish in his speeches."

I am here tempted, before resuming my narrative, to introduce a curious anecdote, in which Lord Melville and my father were concerned, and which the Baronet took peculiar pleasure in relating.—"My friend, Dr Adam Smith," he used to say, "one day invited me to dine with him in the Canongate, and meet Burke and Windham, who were passing through Edinburgh on their way to the Highlands. The conversation turned upon the romantic scenery which the strangers were to visit, and I particularly enlarged upon the views along the road between Dunkeld and Blair, advising them not to remain cooped up in a post-chaise, but to stroll at leisure through the woods.

"Three years afterwards, when I had almost forgotten this advice, Mr Windham came up to me in the House of Commons, and taking me behind the Speaker's chair, enquired, Whether I remembered having advised him, at Adam Smith's, to stroll through the woods between Dunkeld and Blair? He then proceeded—'In consequence of your advice, Burke and I met with an adventure, which has left a strong impression upon my mind. Ten miles from Dunkeld we saw a young female sitting alone under a tree,

with a book in her hand. Burke proposed that we should see what book this solitary damsel was reading. We had a long conversation with her, in which she related to us her whole history, and showed great smartness and ability. She was daughter of a small proprietor, called the Baron Maclaren, had been educated at a boarding-school in Perth, and was reading one of the last novels from the London press. I have not been able to get this mountain nymph out of my head, and I wish you, as soon as possible, to ascertain whether she is single.' I lost no time," continued Sir John, "in writing to the minister of the parish, and was informed, to Mr Windham's great regret, that she was married to a medical gentleman, and had gone to the East Indies.

"Long afterwards, on a visit at Dunira, I repeated this anecdote to Lord Melville. He immediately exclaimed—'I am more interested in that matter than you imagine;' and proceeded to inform me, that in a ride from Blair to Dunkeld, having called for Baron Maclaren, he was surprised by a request from a young and beautiful female (the Baron's daughter), to speak with her alone. As soon as they were out of hearing, she addressed him,—'Mr Dundas, I am told that you are a great man, and what is much better, a very good man, and I will therefore trust you with a secret. There is a young man in this neighbourhood who has a great attachment for me ;

lities and financial knowledge. He remarks, that Mr Pitt should take warning from the impeachment of his old ally, and not depend on hollow friends to defend him against avowed and exasperated enemies. He represents to him the facility with which plausible accusations might be grounded upon the multifarious transactions of a long and arduous administration. He even ventures to illustrate his proposition by referring to particulars which admitted of a malicious and unfair construction. It is remarkable that, among the charges which he mentions as being specious, and yet unquestionably false, I find the very imputations cast upon the Minister by a late popular historian of his own times. Mr Pitt was not offended with this freedom ; on the contrary, he showed Sir John repeated marks of confidence and good-will. In May following, he appointed him a Commissioner for superintending the construction of new roads and bridges in the north of Scotland. In August he sent him, through Mr Huskisson, the Secretary to the Treasury, a very cordial message, expressing readiness to bestow upon him a remuneration for his laborious and expensive services to the public. On the 21st of November he made a second communication to the same effect, expressed in still more friendly terms. But the career of this great statesman was now drawing rapidly to a close. The calamities of our allies upon the continent, the increasing opposition which he experien-

long enough in power to discover the impracticability of peace with an ambitious despot, and to learn, from personal experience, the overwhelming fatigues of office to a broken constitution. He died on the 13th of September, and the Administration did not long survive. A new Ministry was formed, under the Duke of Portland, of which one of the leading members was Mr Perceval, who held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, two years afterwards, that of first Lord of the Treasury. When Mr Pitt, a short time before his death, was asked, "What will become of the country if we lose you? Where shall we find a successor?" He answered, in a single word, "Perceval." To this amiable man, firm patriot, and efficient statesman, my father was warmly attached. In him he found a politician sufficiently intent upon the internal improvement of the country. Their communications with each other form a voluminous body of papers, relating partly to agriculture, and partly to the war in Spain, but chiefly to the great question of finance, which, in 1810-11, agitated the country.

Before proceeding, however, with these political details, I think it right, in this place, to bring forward some occurrences connected with my father's family history and literary labours. Although my father was partial to the system of education in Edinburgh, as combining the advantages of public with

those of private tuition, yet, since he intended his eldest son (now Sir George Sinclair) for political life, he sent him first to the school at Harrow, and afterwards to the University of Göttingen. My brother's residence in Germany led to a very singular adventure, which I may here introduce, as illustrating the character of the great continental conqueror.

In 1806, when Prussia, after witnessing the fall of Austria, ventured, unexpectedly, to resist the aggression of Napoleon, my brother had occasion to make a journey through the seat of war. Accompanied by Mr Regel, a clergyman of Gotha, he set out from that place to Leipsic. The rapid advance of the French army, on the one hand, and the requisitions for horses and carriages by the Prussians on the other, soon reduced the travellers to such difficulties, that they were obliged to leave their carriage, and most of their baggage at Schön Gleina, a country residence of my brother's friend, the Duke of Saxe Gotha. They hired a peasant to convey a few necessaries in a wheelbarrow, while they continued their journey on foot; and in this way they had not proceeded far before they repented of their enterprise. They fell in with a French detachment, and were carried prisoners before Murat, then Grand Duke of Berg, who examined them separately, and with great strictness, though with a polite and even kind attention, such as they did not anticipate. He declared, however, that

he must send them for re-examination to his Majesty the Emperor and King, and for that purpose placed them under the charge of Count Froberg, a Bavarian nobleman, who, fortunately for my brother, had spent some time in England, and was well acquainted with several of his friends. The party accordingly proceeded in the Count's carriage to Auma, the headquarters of Napoleon, where they arrived at a very early hour in the morning. I give the remainder of the adventure in Sir George Sinclair's own words:—  
“ The Count alighted from the carriage, and repaired to the house at which the Emperor's headquarters were situated. He returned almost immediately, and informed us that his Majesty had retired to rest; but added, that he would come and let us know as soon as the Emperor was ready to receive us.

“ The morning was very cold, and we remained rather uncomfortably in the caleche (the leather in front of which closed but imperfectly) for upwards of an hour. My friend, Mr Regel, and I agreed that we would not prepare any answers to any questions; but that by narrating every circumstance exactly as it occurred, we should avoid every discrepancy which could excite any suspicion. The Count at last returned, and informed us that the Emperor was up, and wished to see us. This was to us an anxious moment; and we descended from the carriage with feelings which I shall not attempt to portray. ‘ You need not be



M. Britannique.\* ‘D’où venez vous?’ † ‘Sire, je viens de Gotha en Saxe; et en me rendant de là à Leipzig, j’ai été arrêté par quelques soldats des avant-postes, qui m’ont mené à Gera chez le Grand Duc de Berg; et S. A. m’a envoyé ici pour avoir l’honneur d’être examiné par V. M.’ ‡ ‘Par où êtes vous passé?’ ‘Sire, je suis passé par Weimar, Erfurt, et Jena, d’où n’ayant pas pu procurer des chevaux pour nous conduire plus loin que jusqu’à Gleina.’ ‘Où est Gleina? et qu’est que c’est?’ ‘Gleina, sire, est une petite village appartenante au Duc de Gotha.’ ||

“Upon hearing that I had passed through these two places he paused, and then said, ‘Tracez-moi le plan de votre route.’ § He then sat down at a table, on which a map of Germany was spread, in every respect similar to the one which I had seen at the Grand Duke’s. Berthier was seated at a smaller table in the corner of the room, to take notes of what

\* Sire, I am a subject of his Britannic Majesty.

† Where do you come from?

‡ Sire, I came from Gotha, in Saxony; and in going from thence to Leipzig, I was detained by some soldiers of the advanced guard, who brought me to the house of the Grand Duke of Berg at Gera, and his highness sent me here to have the honour of being examined by your Majesty.

|| Which road did you come by? Sire, I came by Weimar, Erfurt, and Jena; from whence not having been able to procure horses to take us further than Gleina. Where is Gleina—and what is it? Sire, Gleina is a small village belonging to the Duke of Gotha.

§ Trace out the plan of your route.

not had any opportunity to ascertain. He asked me if I had been at the parade? I replied in the affirmative. ‘How many regiments were present?’ ‘Sire, I cannot tell—the Duke of Brunswick was then at Erfurt, and there seemed to be almost as many officers as soldiers assembled on the parade.’ ‘Is Erfurt a well fortified town?’ ‘Sire, I know very little about the strength of fortifications.’ ‘Y-a-t-il un chateau à Erfurt?’\* Upon this point I felt some doubts, but was afraid to plead ignorance again, lest he should imagine that it was feigned. I, therefore, boldly said, ‘Oui, Sire, il y a un chateau.’† After enquiring whether I had made any observations on the road between Erfurt and Weimar, he proceeded to question me minutely as to the state of the latter place—the number of troops quartered there—the destination of the Grand Duke, &c.

“On my mentioning that Jena was the next place at which we stopped, Napoleon did not immediately discover its exact situation on the map. I, therefore, had the honour to point to it with my finger, and show him the place at which he so soon afterwards achieved so brilliant and decisive a victory. He enquired who commanded at Jena—what was the state of the town—whether I knew any particulars about the garrison, &c.; and then made similar enquiries with regard to Gleina, and the intervening road.

\* Is there a castle at Erfurt?

† Yes, Sire, there is a castle.

I received them during the preceding year ; and I also produced from another pocket, some communications of a more recent date. When I laid these upon the table, Napoleon pushed them quickly towards Count Froberg, nodding to him at the same time rapidly with his head. The Count immediately took up the letters, and said to the Emperor, whilst opening them, that, from having examined and conversed with me during our journey, he thought he could be responsible for the truth of every thing I had said.

“ After cursorily glancing through some of the papers, he said, ‘ These letters are of no consequence, and quite of a private nature ; for instance, here is one from Mr Sinclair’s father, in which, after reminding him of the attention he had paid to the Greek and Latin languages in England, he expresses a hope that the same attention will be bestowed upon the acquisition of the French and German abroad.’

“ Napoleon’s features here relaxed into a smile, and I never can forget the kindness with which he eyed me, whilst he said, ‘ Vous avez donc appris le Grec et le Latin ; quels auteurs avez vous lu ?’ \*

“ Not a little surprised at this unexpected question, I mentioned Homer, Thucydides, Cicero, and Horace ; upon which he replied, ‘ C’est bien, c’est fort bien ;’ †

\* You have then learnt Greek and Latin ; what authors have you studied ?

† That is good, very good.

and remarks. He omitted nothing that was necessary, and asked nothing that was superfluous. I entered his apartment under the impression that I was allowed to appear before the greatest man of the age. My prejudices against him, I must admit, were very strong. I considered him as the implacable enemy of my country, and the restless subjugator of Europe; but I could not quit his presence without admiring the acuteness of his intellect, and feeling the fascination of his smile.

“As soon as Mr Regel's examination was over, Napoleon said to Count Froberg, ‘Retenez les quelques jours, jusqu'à ce que quelque chose de décisif sera arrivé; et puis renvoyez-les.’”\*

The battle of Jena was an event sufficiently decisive to entitle the travellers to their liberty. The French commandant at Gera, on giving them their passports, observed, with a laugh, that he believed they could not now do any harm, if they were ever so willing. My brother proceeded afterwards to Vienna, where he remained some time.

Among the literary undertakings of Sir John Sinclair, the most laborious, perhaps, was the execution of several works, composed on a plan entirely his own, to which he gave the name of the *Codean System*. The object of his system was the condensation

\* Detain them for some days till something decisive has happened, and then dismiss them.

work would keep pace with the progress of the sciences, and remain a cheap, correct, and convenient book of reference to the student and man of letters. The word Code, to some persons, suggests the idea of inherent and indisputable authority ; but the sense in which he employed the term was simply that of a digest or compilation ; and though he designated his plan a system of codes, he intended merely to complete, with his own hand, works upon the four great subjects of Health, Agriculture, Political Economy, and Religion. I shall here give a short account of the two former of these digests, reserving, for another place, any reference to the two latter, which he left unfinished.\*

\* The general advantages of the Codean System are well expressed in the subjoined extract of a communication to Sir John from Mr Attwood of Birmingham : “ In the more early ages of society, while knowledge was less multitudinous in its various channels, it might be easy for a man of tolerable application to make himself acquainted with it, upon any given subject. But now, works upon every branch of knowledge are so exceedingly numerous, and so great a proportion of almost every work becomes antiquated by the progress of things, that it is really an Herculean task to search, read, study, and discriminate them all. The ‘*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*,’—the few scattered truths which have resisted so many storms in the ocean of time, and which even seem to derive strength from the assaults which have shattered the fabrics of error,—all these valuable relics of the days gone by, ought certainly to be collected and preserved as the inestimable guides of life. To extract, condense, and exhibit these truths, which the progress of

efforts of such a mind, diligent and penetrating, keen and indefatigable, would on one subject carry you a great length, but the physicians will not permit a man of fashion or a farmer to poach with impunity in their manor. They will strangle your book if they can.”\*

A similar caution, though not precisely on the same grounds, is from the pen of Bishop Watson.—“ I cannot but admire both the activity of your genius and the versatility of your talents; take care, however, that you do not injure your own health; the desire of fame is as dangerous to a literary man as that of martial celebrity is to a soldier.”†

Other friends, however, both at home and on the continent, encouraged him to persevere. Baron Edlcrantz, of Sweden, remarked to him, that the “ art of preserving health and giving longevity to man formed a link in that chain of useful pursuits to which Sir John had devoted all his time.” He was himself persuaded that, even without a scientific knowledge of anatomy and physiology, many valuable rules might be deduced from extensive enquiries and judicious personal observations. He remarked that the operation of different medicines is not discovered by *à priori* reasonings, but by that kind of experimental induction which Lord Bacon, its great promoter, has justly called the test of truth and the rule of utility; that the

\* Letter, dated 26th February, 1805.

† Letter, dated 11th October, 1806.

properties of the substances most useful in medicine have been usually discovered by accident, rather than anticipated by science; and, moreover, that useful practices and modes of cure may be long employed in certain districts, or by private individuals, without becoming known to the public at large, or receiving due consideration from systematic practitioners. He was persuaded that, by a diligent perusal of works already published on the subject of health, as well as by extensive correspondence with intelligent individuals, whose advanced age, or attention to the peculiarities of their own constitution, gave great weight to their opinion, he might raise a pyramid of materials, out of which, when submitted to the revision of eminent physiologists, a treatise might be constructed, free from the technicalities of science, and yet not only intelligible to the general reader, but useful to the Faculty. My father also thought that the attention of physicians was oftener occupied with the means of curing disease than of preserving health. The fact was admitted in a very candid letter of Dr Beddoes.—“ I doubt whether they” (physicians) “ possess any great fund of peculiar information concerning the effect of the circumstances in which men are placed upon their health. Indeed, it has never been accurately studied by medical men, because it was not an obvious source of profit; nor by others, on account of the profound ignorance concerning ourselves in which we are all brought up.”

Sir John's first step was to collect a medical library, including all the most celebrated works, from Galen and Hippocrates, down to Buchan and Arbuthnot; from the bulky tomes of Hoffmann, down to pamphlets and popular treatises. He then began a correspondence, which ultimately became so voluminous, that a selection from the replies to his queries, together with hints, suggestions, and emendations, can with difficulty be included in a large chest. Nothing can exceed the variety both of the materials and of the contributors. There are communications from all quarters of the world; from China, from North and South America, from the Barbary States, from the East and West Indies, from Persia, and from every part of the European continent. These documents relate, immediately or remotely, to all the functions of the human body; to all diseases, real or imaginary; to all remedies; to all the infinitely varied peculiarities of individual constitutions; to all varieties of diet, animal, vegetable, and mineral; to all modes of discipline and exercise, bathing, walking, riding, dancing, gymnastics, and calisthenics; and to the effects of different soils and climates. Curious instances of longevity are copiously described, including persons who were understood to have reached 164, 172, and even 185 years of age, together with the probable means by which the vital energy had been so long preserved. The collection teems also



he, “ will be gratified when your work upon health and longevity comes out ; as it will comprehend every thing which is known upon this important subject.”\*

The Code of Health appeared originally in four thick octavo volumes. The first of them contains the author's own opinions on dietetics and therapeutics. He begins by an explanation of the circumstances which necessarily tend to promote health and longevity, independent of individual management, or the observance of particular rules. Under this head are discussed the effects of parentage, growth, and natural constitution, of the faculties and passions, of situation, of soil and climate, of rank, education, and employment. The writer next lays down rules for preserving health and promoting longevity. This part includes the subject of air, food, digestion, exercise, sleep, clothing, amusements, habitation, medicine, together with temper, habits, cleanliness, bathing, accidents, and travelling, or change of residence. In the concluding part, the author suggests regulations for the health of the community, under nine heads, such as, for example, police of diet, police for the health of sailors or soldiers, police of medicine, police of public institutions.

In the second volume, Sir John traces the history of medicine by means of numerous writers, from the earliest ages, to the times of Hippocrates ; and ha-

\* Letter, dated November, 1805.

Ploucquet had been able to produce no more than sixty-two.

The anticipations of Arthur Young as to the severity of criticism to be apprehended by an agriculturist and a financier trespassing on the peculiar and jealously guarded province of the faculty, were fully realized. Magazines and reviews, both medical and literary, simultaneously attacked the Code of Health. The most trifling errors or discrepancies were magnified into serious faults or gross contradictions; and recipes, not known by the reviewer to have proceeded from the most eminent practitioners, were eagerly made the subject of misplaced, though brilliant jocularity. Criticisms came forth more creditable to the humour and sarcastic power than to the good sense or solid information of the critics. No doubt, some of the materials in the Code were superfluous, and some unsatisfactorily arranged; the rules also in some cases were fanciful or minute; but the public appreciated the substantial value of the work. The first edition was sold within a fortnight. The author, moreover, had the satisfaction of receiving, from competent authorities, Dr Matthew Baillie, Dr Beddoes, Dr Currie, and many others, the assurance that his work was interesting, perspicuous, and instructive. Various individuals, also, of penetration and intelligence, gratefully related to him the benefit they had derived from following his directions. One intelligent correspondent assured him that he made a practice of

On the whole, the author has communicated the most important results which reason, experience, and reading had taught him regarding the effects of external substances upon health." The learned Foderé drew many of the facts and arguments in his treatise on the improvement and sanification of countries from the authority of Sir John Sinclair. A translation also into French was executed by Dr Odier, an able Swiss physician, who described the work as likely to prove highly useful to the science of medicine. The celebrated Dr Hallé had resolved to superintend the publication of another French version, but was prevented by his untimely death.

Sir John lived to publish five editions of the Code. In the latter impressions, all the quotations from ancient and modern authors were omitted, which had increased the bulk without increasing proportionably the value of the performance. The last edition printed, 1833, was very carefully and effectually revised. In a review of this edition, a well-informed critic observes, that "the fact of the work being a compilation by one not belonging to the profession, certainly operated unfavourably against it."\* He remarks, however, that professional readers had at length discovered the value of the materials in the Code; that not only he himself had repeatedly derived useful information from it, but that to his knowledge

\* Edinburgh Medical Journal, 1834.

received much pleasure and information. The work cannot fail to be a public benefit, for no species of composition is more impressive than that in which maxims are illustrated by facts."

The celebrated Robert Hall of Leicester thus acknowledges a copy of the Code presented to him by the author :

" Bristol, 3d Oct. 1828.

" Dear and honoured Sir,

" I feel myself very much honoured by the interest you have been pleased to manifest in the state of my health, and more especially for the kind present of your most valuable book. I have not yet had time to read it through ; but have seen enough of it to convince me that it is the most judicious and comprehensive digest of whatever relates to the subject of health that the world has been favoured with. I shall peruse it frequently and carefully, and endeavour to derive from it all the benefit I can.

" That your life may be prolonged yet to a distant period, and that after serving your generation according to the will of God, you may be gathered in, as a shock of corn fully ripe, is the sincere prayer of your highly obliged friend and humble servant,

" ROBERT HALL."

The following letter is from the pen of the Rev.

peals and entails, and all the night in politics? Yours most sincerely,

“ ELDON.”

“ Feb. 5, 1830.”

*Sir William Grant to Sir John Sinclair.*

“ Dawlish, 27th Feb. 1830.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Allow me to thank you for your kind communication of the 8th inst., to which I might somewhat sooner have *scrawled* an answer, but am hardly now able to *write* one. My fingers have never perfectly recovered from the paralytic attack which I endured last autumn, and our unusually severe winter super-induced rheumatism in my arm, from which the present mild weather is only now beginning to relieve me. The rules you have been so good as to send me appear to be very rational, though some of them are not applicable to my situation. My *business* lies within a very narrow compass, and my *reading* has now no pretension to the name of *study*. Literary leisure is my portion; literary occupation is yours. Though I read a good deal, it is almost wholly for my own amusement. Your reading has the further and more important object of contributing to the instruction of others. I sincerely wish you health and strength to complete your useful labours.

“ Though much gratified by your intended mention of my exertions on your election committee, I could

and guide it on the white paper without seeing what I write. Forgive defects, and believe me to be, my dear sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

“ADAM FERGUSON.”

It is but justice to my father's memory to record, in this place, that his desire to prevent or alleviate the diseases of his fellow-creatures was not confined to the exercise of his literary abilities. In this, as in other instances, he showed willingness to exert his personal influence for the benefit of others. He was among the earliest patrons of the illustrious Jenner, and zealously endeavoured, first to diffuse a knowledge of his great discovery, and afterwards to procure for him a suitable reward. On the establishment of a society to promote the practice of Vaccination, Sir John was, with one exception, the only member of either House of Parliament who joined the institution; and when the question of bestowing a parliamentary recompense upon the Doctor was under discussion, he strenuously supported the larger sum. “I would have moved,” he said, “for doubling the amount, had I seen the smallest prospect of success.”

As another evidence of my father's usefulness in the medical department, I may mention his exertions in 1806 for the establishment of a Lunatic Asylum near Edinburgh. Some parochial, as well as private receptacles for the insane, had long existed in that neighbourhood, but these were all upon a small scale,

British husbandry, bringing together into one view, for the sake of unity, the greater portion of his private, as well as official labours. The Code of Agriculture, now to be considered, was published long after he had resigned the Presidency of the Board.

In the introduction to this volume, he remarks upon the rude and imperfect state of husbandry in former times ; when its processes, handed down by tradition from the darkest ages, were carried on mechanically, and could not be explained on any rational or intelligible principles. But by the labours of the Board, of which it was his happiness to be the founder, so many well-informed individuals had made known the results of their experience, and such a body of information had been collected, that the time was come when a digest, explaining both the principles and the practices of the art, might be successfully attempted. Of such a work, Sir John Sinclair, from his experience as an agriculturist, and his extensive acquaintance among farmers in every district of the kingdom, was peculiarly called upon to be the author.

To arrange the subject into the most practical form, he supposes himself instructing a novice in agriculture, who is engaged in the selection of a farm, and he describes, first of all, the *preliminary points* to be considered, as climate, soil, subsoil, tenure, rents, burdens, size, &c. Next, he explains the *means* by which the farmer is to ensure *success*, and treats of capital, regular accounts, arrangement of agricultural

of France. In his letter to Sir John, announcing the progress of his labours, M. de Dombasle says, “ I have been occupied, sir, for some time in translating your very excellent ‘ Code of Agriculture.’ If any thing can contribute to raise agriculture in France to the rank of a science, a rank which it could not hitherto pretend to, it will certainly be the publication of this work, which is at once the most systematic, the most concise, and in my opinion the most perfect, that has hitherto been written in any language.” \*

Having so often quoted Arthur Young in approbation of my father’s labours, I shall in this instance refer to another very competent authority, that gentleman’s successor as Secretary to the Board. “ I have already read,” says Mr Webbe Hall, “ and shall again go over your most comprehensive work with renewed pleasure and improvement ; and if any further observations occur to me, I shall not fail to state them to you ; although I think, that in its present state, we may fairly call it as perfect and comprehensive as human industry and talent (which we know at their best estate must be imperfect) will

\* “ Depuis quelque tems je m’occupe, Monsieur, de traduire en Français votre excellentissime *Code d’Agriculture*. Si quelque chose peut contribuer à élever en France l’agriculture au rang de *Science*, pretention que nous ne pouvons avoir jusqu’ici, ce sera sans doute la publication de cet ouvrage, le plus dogmatique, le plus concise, et, à mon avis, le plus parfait, qui ait encore été écrit dans quelque langue que ce soit.”



down his remarks, as he can spare time to look into the work,—and he highly approves of the idea of the second edition being generally circulated, with a view to making the third edition as perfect as possible ;—in as far as our present knowledge extends.”

On presenting a copy of this work to the Prince Regent, Sir John Sinclair received, through Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, an answer from his Royal Highness, testifying the “satisfaction, which the Prince derived both from the success of Sir John’s persevering efforts in the great field of agriculture, and from the high renown that crowned his persevering labours.”

In the year 1805, a circumstance occurred remarkably illustrating the zeal with which the subject of these memoirs espoused the cause of his friends ; the sacrifices he was prepared to make for them ; and the unforeseen yet powerful influence of even the minutest circumstances over the fortunes of mankind. I refer to the great Roxburghe cause, which, by the merest accident, attracted my father’s notice ; occupied the greater portion of his time and attention during seven years ; and ended in the advancement of a friend to the dignity of a dukedom, and to the possession of an estate producing above L.50,000 a-year.

Walking one day in Salisbury’s Botanical Gardens, he happened to meet his old and intimate acquaint-

ters, precede the distant heirs-male, who, by the existing patent, would be entitled to the earldom. Having great influence with Charles I., he surrendered his earldom in July, 1643, and obtained a new charter, conveying to him a power, of which heraldry presents few examples, that of making "his heirs of entail Earls in all time to come." Before he had exercised this almost royal prerogative, a chance appeared of male posterity by his own body, of which he hastened to avail himself. In October of that year, his second wife died, upon which, without loss of time, being then seventy-three, he took for his third wife a daughter of the Earl of Morton; by whom, however, he had no issue. In 1648, when this last hope of a son was at an end, he finally executed, with renewed powers, granted in 1646, his original plan of nominating his successors.

This settlement is a complete genealogical curiosity; it was ratified by the Parliament of Scotland after the surrender of Charles I. to the Scottish auxiliary army, and immediately before the subjugation of Scotland by Cromwell; it had the dukedom of 1707 absolutely attached to the series of heirs which it appoints; and its provisions are themselves singularly arbitrary and capricious. Desirous to have as much as possible of his own blood in his successors, he resolved that both the Earl and Countess of Roxburghe should be his own descendants. With this view he required that Jean, eldest daughter of Harry, Lord

Harry, Lord Ker, who now had male descendants. Lady Essex and Lady Mary Ker insisted that they were heirs-of-line, or heirs-general to their brother, the third Duke, and consequently to Jean, eldest daughter of Harry, Lord Ker. Sir William Drummond of Logiealmond urged that he was heir-male to the elder brother of William [Drummond] Ker, second Earl of Roxburghe, and through him, a descendant also of the first Earl, though not by Harry, Lord Ker. General Ker alleged that he was nearest collateral heir-male of the first Earl, whose heirs-male whatsoever were called to the succession, in case the issue-male of Harry Lord Ker's eldest daughter failed; and, no doubt, to her posterity the succession seems to be limited, by the final and regulating clause. His claims of blood were somewhat far-fetched, for he was in the twenty-second degree of consanguinity to the third Duke,\* since both the Duke and the General were in the eleventh descent from two brothers, who lived three centuries and a half before.

Another circumstance added to the difficulties of

\* It is understood that this third Duke was to have been married to a Princess of Mecklenburg Strelitz, but that their nuptials were prevented by the marriage of her sister to the King of Great Britain. His Grace remained a bachelor all his life, and was highly esteemed at court, in proof of which it may be mentioned that George III. gave him both the Garter and the Thistle, a union of honour of which there is but one example in the Duke of Hamilton, killed in the celebrated duel with Lord Mahon.

this perplexing litigation ;—there was a clause in the entail, empowering the heir in possession to grant *fews*—that is, perpetual leases—of such parts and portions of the estate as he might think fitting. By a strange abuse of this power, which was granted for the benefit of the heir, the last Duke, though he was only in possession of the estate about a year and a half, being seventy-six when he succeeded, executed fourteen deeds, granting, at a low rent, to his friend and relation, Mr Bellenden Ker, *fews* to the extent of 69,955 acres, as the parts and portions of the estate which he thought fitting, while he reserved only the mansion-house and forty-five acres to the heir of entail. His Grace, at the same time, in case he should himself prove to be the last heir of entail, appointed him successor to the whole estate.

Appearances were at first by no means favourable to the pretensions of Sir James Norcliffe Innes. Not only was the case obscure and complicated in itself, but a casual circumstance had nearly hid from him the only ground on which his claims could safely rest. It happened that a law-suit was in progress for recording the Roxburghe entail, and that in the papers printed on that occasion, an error was committed by the clerk in copying the deed. He had imagined the contraction *yr* to mean *her*, instead of *their*, and had written *her*, instead of *their* heirs-male; a difference of the last importance to Sir J. N. Innes, as the word *her* would have referred exclusively to the eldest

daughter of Harry, Lord Ker, whereas the word *their* included the younger daughters, from one of whom he was descended. Happily, Mr Horne would not be satisfied without inspecting the original, where he found the reading so essential to the interests of his client.

Encouraged by this discovery, my father strongly advised Sir James to prosecute his claims, offering him at the same time every assistance. The first point was to obtain possession of the property and mansion-house immediately on the Duke's death—an event evidently not far distant. My father, therefore, urged Sir James to provide for this emergency by appointing Mr Horne, as his commissioner, to take without delay the necessary steps in his behalf. When the Duke died, Mr Horne's activity anticipated the other candidates—a circumstance necessary to the prosecution of the claim—as it would have been imprudent to carry on the action had the rents and title-deeds of the estate been in the hands of a rival claimant; and even if Sir James had been successful, the proceeds in the mean while might have been lost.

Notwithstanding this success at the commencement of the suit, the difficulties to be surmounted were most disheartening. The opinions given by counsel continued to be less favourable than had been expected. The number of actions necessary to be raised was so great, and the expense of each so burdensome, that Sir James's funds were soon ex-

hausted. He applied for aid to his own relatives, the Duke of Gordon and the Earl of Moray, but these opulent noblemen had so little expectation of his ultimate success, that they refused to grant him any advances. Sir John, however, generously came forward, and on his security the sum of L.14,000 was raised. Without this timely interposition, the law-suit must have been abandoned. But it never was impeded for a single moment by want of funds. My father also insisted that his friend should not contract his personal expenses, when the latter had resolved to give up his equipage, and retire into obscurity till the question was decided. During a long and harassing litigation of seven years, while my father, having risked so large a sum in the cause, suffered much anxiety on his own account, he exerted himself to keep up the spirit of the desponding litigant, whose impatience gave him much uneasiness. "I wish, with all my heart," Sir James would say, "that I had never stirred in this business. It would have been better for me, at my time of life, to remain quietly in Devonshire.\* I never shall see the end of this weary law-suit. I only wish I never had begun it."

The most critical moment occurred after the greatest dangers appeared to have been over. The Court of Session had decided in favour of Sir James, and a

\* He was then upwards of seventy.

decree was expected from Lord Chancellor Eldon, confirming their decision on an appeal to the House of Lords. But the King's illness occurred; the Prince of Wales became Regent; a change of Ministry seemed inevitable; and Lord Erskine, the expected new Chancellor, was well-known to have told his brother, the Earl of Buchan, that he considered General Ker the person entitled to the succession.

The much dreaded change, however, in the Chancellorship did not take place. Lord Eldon remained on the Woolsack, and, after repeated delays, moved at length for judgment in favour of Sir James. The whole of my father's correspondence with the claimant himself, with the counsel and agents employed, and with those whom he endeavoured to interest in the cause, are now before me; vividly illustrating the anxiety, the distress, the irritation, the alternation of hope and fear, and the general preponderance of alarm, which those unfortunates will best appreciate, who have themselves been subjected to the "law's delay."

At length, however, Sir John was rewarded for all his care and risk and labour and fatigue, by seeing his old friend put in possession of the title and estate of Roxburghe.

On obtaining his dukedom, the Duke wrote the following grateful letter :—

“ My dear Sir John Sinclair,

“ I thank you for your kind congratulations on the right to the title of Duke and Earl of Roxburghe being finally adjudged to be mine by the House of Lords. I should be very insensible to your good offices, were I ungrateful for your long continued exertions to procure me my right.

“ I hope the inflammation in your eyes will soon abate. You are continually exercising them rather beyond what you ought in the service of your country—added to the share I have had, pending this seven years’ litigation, in the various turns and windings of the Roxburghe causes.

“ The Duchess joins in returning many good wishes. Believe me most sincerely yours,

“ ROXBURGHE.

“ Upper Grosvenor Street, 9th May, 1812.”

His Grace took the earliest opportunity of relieving my father from his responsibilities ; and on the 8th of August, 1812, wrote to him as follows :—

“ Mr Swinton came here yesterday, and brought with him all the conjunct securities of yourself, Messrs Horne, and myself, which are now all in my possession cancelled.

“ While I have memory, I never shall be unmindful of the readiness with which you served me in



money matters, and your advice and assistance in forwarding the Roxburghe litigation."

A curious trait of the Duke's character developed itself not long after his accession to the long-contested honours of the peerage. He proposed to erect a monument in honour of his first wife, who had left him a widower during the progress of the litigation ; but was much perplexed as to her proper designation. Ought she to be styled simply Lady Norcliffe, under which name she had lived and died ; or, since she had survived the former Duke, and was therefore actually Duchess of Roxburghe, though of course ignorant of her right, was she not entitled to the dignities of the peerage ? He held a grave consultation with an eminent genealogist upon the subject. I was long uncertain what course in this extreme case of titular difficulty the authority appealed to recommended to be taken ; and though I have since discovered that he was favourable to her Grace's pretensions, I am still ignorant whether his advice was followed, and whether the lady in question must descend to posterity with or without her legitimate distinction.

The connexion of Sir John Sinclair with the Roxburghe cause, however beneficial to a friend, was injurious to himself. It rendered him obnoxious to the opposing parties, who viewed him as the primary cause of their disappointment ; besides that the accu-

mulated business of the lawsuit withdrew his attention from his own affairs.

His attention to them was, during this period, particularly required ; for while he was assisting in the Roxburghe cause, he was engaged, and deeply, in another lawsuit of much more importance to himself.

Among the many individuals to whose success in life he essentially contributed, was George Anderson, Esq., a native of Caithness. This gentleman, having obtained through him an appointment in the medical service of the East India Company, spent many years of his life in the Madras Presidency, where he became engaged in various pecuniary transactions with Walajah Bahauder, Nabob of Arcot. Mr Anderson, on his return home, found his health in a declining state, and made a settlement of his affairs. By a holograph deed, dated at Wooler, in Northumberland, 7th June, 1791, after providing for his nearest relatives, he bequeathed to my father certain balances due to him by the Nabob.

The terms of this bequest do the highest honour to the gratitude and patriotism of the testator.

“ Having received the fullest assurances from the Right Honourable Henry Dundas in person, and from the Minister” (Mr Pitt), “ conveyed to me through the channel of George Rose, Esq., that my claims upon his Highness the Nabob of Arcot it should be their business to see adjusted ; as his High-

ness had candidly acknowledged the various sums lent him were for the use of the Honourable Company, I do hereby assign and make over the whole of these claims, above stated, to my much respected friend Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, as the grateful tribute of his countryman, in order to enable him to carry into execution those patriotic measures, which his public spirit and his philanthropy have suggested, but which his fortune may not be adequate to."

Mr Anderson confirmed this deed more formally on reaching Edinburgh, and died a few months afterwards in France. - My father felt a moral certainty that claims left to him under such circumstances, and for such purposes, could not be otherwise than well founded. The testator could not be himself deceived, and could have no motive for deceiving others. On all occasions he expressed his conviction that the sums in question were actually due to him, and it is not credible that, on the borders of the grave, he should have left invalid claims as a mark of gratitude to his friend and benefactor.

Difficulties, however, arose; and twenty years of irksome and tedious litigation followed before the Carnatic Commissioners pronounced their final decision. I have examined all the voluminous documents connected with the suit, amounting to upwards of a hundred, and may give the substance of them in a few words.

The sums lent by Mr Anderson to the Nabob may be classed under two heads ; loans paid into the Nabob's own treasury, and loans paid on his account into the treasury of the East India Company through John Hollond, Esq., governor of Madras. The sums included under the former head, amounting to 500,000 star pagodas, were all repaid, and a discharge, dated the 10th of September, 1789, was given by Mr Anderson to the Nabob. The sums under the latter head included nine payments, made in the months of April, May, and June, of the same year, and amounted to 136,283 star pagodas. They were advanced at a very critical juncture, when the treasury of the Company was empty, and could not otherwise be supplied. Of these nine advances, seven appear to have been repaid ; but there were no receipts for the two remaining sums, amounting to 42,000 star pagodas, with interest. \*

Two difficulties, however, were to be surmounted in establishing the claim : One was, that Governor Hollond had not paid into the Company's exchequer the sums advanced by Mr Anderson. But, in reply to this objection, it was proved beyond dispute by the acknowledgment of the Nabob himself, and by the report of the Committee of Investigation at Madras, that the advances had been made ; and it was for the

\* A pagoda is about eight shillings. The accumulated interest, during upwards of twenty years, before the decision was given, amounted to a larger sum than the principal.

Governor, not for Mr Anderson, to show how the money placed on the Nabob's account in his hands had been disposed of.

The other difficulty arose from the discharge already mentioned, which was of a date some months subsequent to the loans, and seemed to close all prior transactions of a pecuniary nature between the Nabob and Mr Anderson. The discharge was as follows :—" I, George Anderson, do hereby declare, that all my accounts with his Highness the Nabob Wallajah Bahauder's Circar, from the beginning of my dealings with the Circar to the 10th of September, 1789, being finally adjusted, and the balance paid me as per adjustment, I have delivered the Circar all bonds, enayetnamas, and all other papers I have received."

Sir John, on various grounds, denied that the above discharge, or adjustment, was any bar to his claims ; first, because the discharge referred exclusively to the particular items mentioned, and could not include claims of which no notice whatever was taken in the instrument ; secondly, because it appeared from the discharge itself that no more was intended by the Nabob, than that Mr Anderson, on receiving the balance, should grant a receipt, or release, for the particular accounts thereby settled or adjusted. The words annexed to the instrument are, " Let the sum of star pagodas, 59,313.9, be paid from the treasury, and a proper receipt, witnessed by respectable persons,

that the money you claim has not, nor ever had any connexion with the discharge, and that it is at this moment *bonâ fide* due." Mr Hall adds, "fourteen or fifteen years ago, I could have gone into particulars, and spoken positively ; I am exceedingly sorry that it is not now in my power. But surely the evidence afforded by the report of the Madras Commissioners clearly, to my mind decidedly, illustrates the facts on which some doubts had arisen ; and, combined with the other testimony that has been adduced, establishes your demand upon the broadest basis of equity, if not of law, which, in my humble opinion, is also with you."

In another letter, Mr Stuart Hall states, that to "persons acquainted with the modes usually adopted by the Durbar of the Carnatic, (the Nabob's Court), in transacting business, the conclusion would appear correct and just, that the discharge given by Mr Anderson did not refer to the transactions on which Sir John's claim was founded."

Notwithstanding all these arguments, the Carnatic commissioners considered the discharge as a general settlement of all prior accounts between the Nabob and Mr Anderson, and, on that ground, rejected Sir John Sinclair's demands.

The results of Mr Anderson's generous bequest were most unfortunate. Not only did it fail of proving a benefit to my father and his family, but became eventually a serious detriment, involving him in much

pecuniary embarrassment. Sanguine in this, as he was in all his designs, he resolved at once to prosecute with energy those improvements which, to use the words of Mr Anderson, "his public spirit and philanthropy had suggested, but which his fortune was not adequate to." A debt was thus contracted, which the economy of years was not sufficient fully to discharge, and his expenditure was of necessity diminished, at the very time when its increase became desirable for the education and settlement in life of a numerous family.

The various undertakings, financial, political, agricultural, and juridical, in which hitherto I have represented my father as a conspicuous actor, might lead my readers to imagine that he was so entirely devoted to business as to have no leisure or inclination for works of taste and imagination. But I have the means of showing, that he was as much an enthusiast in advancing the poetry, the music, the dress, the language, customs, and recreations of his countrymen, as for extending their skill in agriculture and the useful arts of life. He was a zealous friend to the Highland Societies, both of London and of Scotland, being an original member of the latter, and, in 1776, president of the former institution. The Highland Society of Scotland has directed principally its attention to agricultural pursuits, and has contributed largely to excite a spirit of improvement throughout North Britain. It awards premiums for discoveries

in all departments of rural industry, and for the best essays on instruments of husbandry ; while, for the local advancement of pastoral economy, it holds annually a large cattle-show, either at Edinburgh or at some one of the provincial capitals. The first exhibition took place at Edinburgh in 1822 ; and meetings have since been held at Glasgow, Perth, Dumfries, Inverness, Kelso, Stirling, Aberdeen, and Ayr. These, in every instance, have been attended with complete success, while, by means of local subscriptions, the number and amount of premiums have been continually increased. So energetic and so well directed have been the operations of the Society in all departments, that it has now attained the rank of a national institution, and may be looked upon as a “ Board of Agriculture ” for Scotland.

The kindred association in London has not only agricultural objects in view, but is also intended to relieve distressed Highlanders in the metropolis, as well as to preserve the national literature and peculiarities of the Celtic race. Among the remains of Celtic literature, the most prominent are the poems of Ossian ; and in the question of their authenticity, the Society could not fail to take a warm interest.

The poems of Ossian had, from time immemorial, been admired and sung by the natives of the Highlands, but had been allowed to remain in the obscurity of the original Gaelic, till the year 1760-2, when James Macpherson published his translation. This work at its



first appearance was received with much applause by many distinguished literary characters, who pronounced it one of the most sublime productions of the human mind. Ossian was considered not inferior to the greatest of Epic poets, and was ranked with Homer, Virgil, and Milton. Dr Blair, who formally introduced the publication to the world, as a venerable remnant of antiquity, newly discovered and brought to view, expatiates on the “solemn and awful grandeur of Ossian,” and affirms of his poetry that it “deserves, more perhaps than any other, to be styled the poetry of the heart.” David Hume pronounces Macpherson’s work “one of the greatest curiosities, in all respects, that ever was discovered in the commonwealth of letters.” Gibbon is delighted with the “bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian.” The Edinburgh Review affirms the collection to possess so high a merit as to have given “a new tone to poetry throughout all Europe.” The sentiments of foreigners concurred with the authorities above enumerated. “Il existe, ce me semble,” says Madame de Staël, “deux littératures tout-à-fait distinctes ; celle qui vient du midi, et celle qui descend du nord ; celle dont Homère est la première source ; celle dont Ossian est l’origine.” \* The work

\* De la littérature. “There exist, as it seems to me, two kinds of literature altogether distinct ; the one has its origin in the South, and the other in the North ; of the one Homer is the source ; of the other Ossian.

was translated, not only into various modern tongues of the continent, but also into Latin, as the common language of the learned. Of these versions, by far the most spirited is the Italian of Cesarotti, memorable for having furnished tales of battle, effusions of lofty natural eloquence, and scenes of wild and warlike grandeur to the young and ardent spirit of Napoleon. An imitation of the Ossianic poetry was also among the earliest efforts of the gloomy and imaginative Byron.\*

The admiration of Ossian, though general, was not unanimous. While numerous critics eulogized the sublimity, or vindicated the authenticity of Macpherson's book, a powerful dissentient appeared in the great dictator of English literature, Dr Samuel Johnson. All his characteristic antipathy to Scotland was roused on this occasion. To acknowledge that in a rude age, when the southern half of Britain was in a state of total barbarism, the most refined sentiments could be uttered and admired in Caledonia, was too much for his Saxon prejudices. His reasonings on this occasion, as we find them in his *Tour*

\* Death of Colmar and Orla. See Byron's "Hours of Idleness."

"I have in my possession a French translation, in 4to, of a curious Russian work, entitled "Fingal; Tragédie en trois actes, traduite du Russe en vers Français par H<sup>re</sup>. J<sup>h</sup>. Dalmas." The French translator subjoins the Russian, together with the music employed in the representation. Of the music, he says, "Elle est si parfaitement analogue au sujet, qu'elle suffiroit pour placer M. Koslowski parmi les grands maîtres, si 'l n'avoit déjà donné des preuves d'un rare talent."

to the Hebrides, and in his conversation preserved by his inimitable biographer, are curious—showing at once strength of argument and boisterousness of passion. He brands Macpherson as a liar, and a ruffian — pronounces his work a cheat—and adds, what was more provoking to its admirers, that it was destitute of all poetical merit. He affirms of Dr Blair, who, from its internal evidences, had vindicated the authenticity of the work, that he was miserably deceived; and assures the enraptured professor that “many men, many women, and many children,” could write such poems. To Sir Joshua Reynolds he declares, that “a man might write such stuff for ever, if he would abandon his mind to it,” and calls the Fingal “a mere unconnected rhapsody—a tiresome repetition of the same images, where there is neither end nor object, design nor moral.” To sarcasm and declamation, he joins more serious grounds of objection; contending, that Erse was never a written language—that no Erse manuscript was an hundred years old—that the ancient documents pretended to by the Highlanders were Irish—that as the bards could not read, they could not be expected to write—that the Ossianic poems were too long to have been committed to memory—and finally, that the easy reception of them in Scotland might be accounted for from the extravagant vanity of Scotsmen, who generally preferred the honour of Scotland to truth.

The literati of England acquiesced almost univer-

sally in the dictum of their lexicographer. Warburton was at first inclined to be an exception, but afterwards yielded to the objections of Bishop Hurd, who considered the poems as “patched up from old Erse fragments.” Warburton’s change of sentiment (a circumstance very rare in his intellectual history) is related by himself with great simplicity and candour. In a letter to Hurd he says—“I have been extremely entertained with the wars of Fingal. He can be no cheat, for I think the enthusiasm of this specifically sublime poetry could hardly be counterfeit. A modern writer would have been less simple and uniform ;—thus far had I written when your letter of Christmas-day came to hand ; as you will easily understand by my submitting to take shame on me, assuring you that I am fully convinced of my false opinion delivered just above concerning Fingal. I did not consider the matter as I ought. Your reasons for the forgery are unanswerable. And of all these reasons but one occurred to me, the want of external evidence, and this I own did shock me. But you have waked me from a very pleasing dream, and made me hate the impostor, which is the most uneasy sentiment of our waking thoughts.” \*

In the Lowlands of Scoland, jealousy of Highland pretensions disposed many to the adoption of the Anglican theory. They found an able representative

\* Warburton’s Letters to Hurd, pp. 334-335.

ted president, to superintend the execution of the work. It was published in three large octavo volumes, including a literal translation in Latin (such as is generally appended to the Greek classics) by R. Macfarlane, A.M.; a translation of the First Book of Fingal into English, with notes, by the Rev. Thomas Ross; also an English version of the Abbé Cesarotti's Dissertation to prove the Authenticity of the Poems, with notes and a supplemental essay, by John M'Arthur, LL.D., concluding with brief notices of books on Celtic literature and antiquities, and a catalogue of ancient Gaelic and Irish manuscripts on Great Britain and Ireland. To these volumes, at the request of the committee, their president prefixed a dissertation of his own, containing a concise and able statement of all the arguments previously adduced to prove the authenticity of the Ossianic poems; together with replies to objections, and some additional evidence which his own industry had collected. My father was exceedingly gratified by the testimonies which, after much research, he brought forward respecting a manuscript of the Temora, Fingal, and other poems of Ossian, deposited in the archives of the Scotch College at Douay, in Flanders, long previous to Macpherson's compilation. Of this curious manuscript, which lives only in description, the greater part was torn and burnt by students ignorant of its value, and the rest destroyed, with the whole property of that seminary, at the French Revolution.

Sir John Sinclair obtained the evidence in question from five clergymen, among whom was Dr Chisholm, a Roman Catholic bishop. The materials were collected about the year 1745, and transcribed into a large folio above three inches thick, in a small character, by Mr John Farquharson, prefect of studies in the college. Another evidence, adduced for the first time in this disquisition, is the fact, that the existence of Swaran, the son of Starno, his wars in Ireland, and his defeat by Fingal, as related by Ossian, are authenticated by ancient Danish history, where a view is given of manners, customs, and opinions, confirming the Ossianic representation. The ingenuity and research called forth in my father's Treatise, gratified in a high degree the predilections of his northern friends. "Your valuable work," says the authoress of the "Letters from the Mountains," (Mrs Grant) "has had with me the effect of making assurance doubly sure." A well-known Encyclopædist of the north "consigns over to invincible unbelief any reader who, after perusing Sir John Sinclair's Dissertation, with the appended letters and notes, believes Macpherson to be more than the translator and editor of Ossian."\*

\* My father was much gratified by the encouragement he received in his Celtic researches from his friend Bishop Watson. In a letter, dated February, 1799, the Bishop writes,— "I am glad that your active spirit has turned your attention to Gaelic literature, of which I know nothing but from Ossian's

The following note from the Author of Waverley is interesting, in connexion with this question :—

“ Mr Scott has the honour to offer respectful compliments to Sir John Sinclair, with his best thanks for the copy of the Essay on Ossian’s poetry. Mr Scott is totally ignorant of the Gaelic, without which he conceives it almost impossible to form an accurate opinion concerning the merits of the respective translations ; but he has no doubt, from the superior simplicity of expression in the new version, it must be nearer the original. When circumstances permit Mr Scott to bestow a more attentive perusal on Sir John Sinclair’s curious pamphlet, he will be happy to embrace the opportunity Sir John offers him, of conversing upon the subject. The principal difficulty seems to Mr Scott to lie in proving the authenticity of the Gaelic version itself, as it seems entirely to rest upon the credit of Mr Macpherson himself, whose character seems to be given up on all hands. The business of the Court, joined to some personal avocations, prevents Mr Scott from at present considering the controversy with much attention.”

“ Castle Street, Thursday, 27th Nov. 1806.

Poems. They are now, I presume, originals, as they are certainly simple and sublime.” After informing Sir John that he had given one of his best livings to a Celtic antiquary, he adds —“ You must look upon me, then, as a co-operator, or at least a wellwisher in your new pursuit.”

the policy of the English Government, after the battle of Culloden, to tame this warlike spirit by suppressing, or if possible obliterating, these local characteristics ; it became, therefore, my father's object to invert this process, and to foster Celtic prowess, by promoting Celtic customs. He addressed, in 1804, a pamphlet upon this subject to the Highland Societies of London and of Scotland, evincing so much curious research as well as zeal in the cause, that the former printed his paper for the use of its members, and likewise for circulation, *gratis*, among the friends of Gaelic antiquity. I have also now before me an unanimous vote of thanks from the same patriotic body to Sir John Sinclair, for having "readily and handsomely consented to write a Memoir or History of the Society ;"—"a performance," adds the secretary, "from which they cannot but anticipate much honour and advantage to the institution, when they recollect that it is to be composed by the author of the Dissertation which introduced to the public the late splendid edition of the works of the immortal Ossian." In this history are described at large all the objects, literary, antiquarian, and benevolent, which the institution had in view ; and some curious anecdotes are related of Highland courage and generosity. I may mention, as a specimen, the reply of a veteran Celt, on being complimented upon the gallant conduct of his regiment in Egypt,—“How could it be otherwise, when



that to the refined ears of Italy, the great Highland bagpipe would be intolerably offensive. But a great triumph awaited him. When his Italian guests saw the exertions of the competitors, the enthusiasm of the audience, and the exultation of the conqueror; and when they heard the rapturous applause with which every sentence in the oration of the preses was received, they declared that they had never witnessed any spectacle more gratifying. "I would have come from Italy to be present," said the Count. "I am proud to think," said the Marchese, "that we too have the bagpipe in our country; it is played by all the peasantry of Calabria."

So habitually was music, from the remotest ages in Scotland, contemplated as a national characteristic, and such alarm did the first appearance of its decay produce, that there is an act of the Scottish Parliament, so early as the year 1579, which states, in its preamble, as a reason for the law, the likelihood of the art falling into decay. In this curious legislative relic, the provost, bailies, councils, &c. of burghs, and the patrons and provosts of colleges, are enjoined, "on their peril, to erect and set up ane sang school, with ane maister sufficient and abill for instruction of the youth in the saide science of musick." This document was often quoted by my father as illustrating the antiquity of Scottish national tunes. When the Persian Ambassador was at Edinburgh, the Baronet took him to the theatre, having prevailed on

rank and fortune ; if it does not, Buonaparte will soon overcome the popular enthusiasm, and we shall become the victims, not merely of his ambition, but of his augmented hatred. By the by, I like not this cramming of the Spanish deputies with turtle and venison ; at such a crisis, a man of true patriotism would scarcely either eat or sleep till he had accomplished the purpose of his mission, and made a report of his success to those who sent him.

“ I am doing nothing, and am, in truth, arrived at that age in which I do not wish to have any thing to do. I have now time for every thing ; and if excessive labour in the prime of life gives a claim to indolence in old age, I know none of my friends who can have better pretensions to the *otia tuta* than yourself. Yours sincerely.

“ R. L.”

In the following letter, Lord Moira remarks, with his usual intelligence and skill, on the benefits derivable from the enthusiasm of the Spaniards.

“ Donington, July 27, 1808.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ You are right in saying, that the occurrences in Spain went beyond the most sanguine hope with which we could have flattered ourselves ; and your Latin quotation would have been equally apposite with the remark, had one not to fear that no

adequate advantage will be drawn from the circumstance. The opportunity was a glorious one. Our Ministers, however, seem to have been incapable of opening their eyes to an orbit sufficient to embrace the magnitude of the object. Without reference to the radical distresses of our situation, without conviction that nothing is gained unless you alter the relative proportion of strength now existing between France and this country, we seem to aim at nothing more than to embarrass Buonaparte for the instant. Suppose him foiled in his designs on Spain, he only misses an acquisition of which he had, in fact, no need. Suppose Spain emancipated from fear of thralldom, our benefit is as nothing, if she sits down upon a compromise with Buonaparte. We had only one national game to play. It was to seize the enthusiasm of Spain, left open to our influence by the entire disorganization of the country, and to direct it, not simply to the clearance of Spain from French armies, but to proclaim vengeance for the insidious attack upon that kingdom. On no other terms can you expect to invite forward the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and without their co-operation the war must finish, whensever it shall finish, by leaving France with a preponderance under which we shall be smothered. One cannot say that this great effort may not be made, but the course of our measures is not at all calculated to bring it about. You see the jealousy of Spain strongly indicated towards us, even at the

moment when they are soliciting succours. And we have taken no step of a nature to extinguish that well-grounded doubt of our good faith, though the entire confidence of Spain in us is now our only chance of escape from the most formidable distresses. It is the galling weight of the public imposts, not what Buonaparte can do against us by force, that constitutes the danger of our situation. And with what sort of forecast is it that we are to look forward to years of protracted contest, with every year a new invasion of the comforts of the people? Added to this, we are reviving all the tricks of diplomacy in Spain; we are fashioning armies for the capture of sea-ports, or the defence of passes; and we are boastingly anticipating a triumph in the independence of Spain, which the inhabitants would achieve without our aid. Let all this succeed to our wish, and we are only just where we were. It is an odd thing to say, but the defeat of the Spanish armies is the only chance which I now see for the conversion of this opportunity (after its first advantages were missed) to the support of any British interest. In the freedom of gallant men we must all rejoice; but our own country demands our attention, and we might honourably engraft our own cause upon the deliverance of Spain. Believe me, my dear Sir John, your very obedient and humble servant,

“MOIRA.”

It is hardly necessary to observe, that my father entered warmly into the sympathies of his correspondents with the bravery and patriotism of Spain ; and perceived the policy of aiding the insurgent patriots in the struggle for their independence. He did not, however, confine this expression of his sentiments to private communications, but again appeared (A. D. 1809) from the press, in a pamphlet, entitled “ Hints regarding the absolute necessity of greater energy in the conduct of our military operations.” His chief object, was to counteract the influence of those timid politicians, who maintained, that we should abandon the Spanish and Portuguese patriots to their own resources, and should rest contented with our naval superiority. He traces the history, and illustrates the military tactics of Napoleon, from various private sources of information, and shows the danger of despising or *misrepresenting* a formidable enemy. He demonstrates, that by superiority in vigour and rapidity, rather than in physical strength, the victories of the French had been achieved. He complains of our own inertness and stupidity, in “ sending one general successively to supersede another ; more like the amusing tricks of a harlequin, than the conduct of important concerns ; sending an army to attack fortifications, without battering cannon to demolish them.” He observes, that “ towards the attainment of success in war, it is essential, as soon as the plan of a campaign is formed, *to carry it on with energy.* Not an instant

should be lost in collecting a body of troops, if possible, more than adequate to the service to be performed; in sending them, with the utmost speed, and under the command of the ablest generals, to their place of destination; in supplying them with every article necessary for their health, their comfort, or their subsistence; and above all, in furnishing them with those instruments of war, by which they can best be enabled to defeat the enemy. The delay of a single day, and sometimes of a single hour, in regard to any one of these important particulars, may decide the issue of a campaign, and the fate of Europe."

It will appear from the above quotation, that my father insisted earnestly on the necessity for providing our army with the most effective military weapons. He was the more anxious on this point, both because our Board of Ordnance, in a very important instance, had recently shown a degree of negligence disgraceful to themselves, and disastrous to the country; and because he was himself at that time labouring to bring forward an ingenious invention, of which all his efforts could not induce them to avail themselves. When Professor Anderson of Glasgow proposed to show his plan of Horse Artillery, "he was treated," says Sir John in the pamphlet before me, "with the utmost contempt, and was told, that he might do what he liked with it; yet we were glad afterwards to borrow that very plan from the French. Their conquest of Switzerland, I know, from the most satisfac-

very evidence was entirely owing to that invention; and many other battles have been gained by it. Little do ministers or statesmen consider, that the fate of a nation may depend upon such discoveries, and that from ignorance or jealousy useful inventions have been either crushed, or kept back by the underlings of a Court of Obivance."

The military weapon which, as I have said, my father had at some time patronised and endeavoured to introduce, was a kind of shell, invented by an ingenious officer of artillery, Lieutenant-Colonel Shrapnel, and now familiarly known by the name of *spherical case-shot*. Shrapnel's invention had nearly shared the fate of *Obivance*. He brought it forward in 1802, but could gain little attention. Like other projectors of genius he was rather an enthusiast, and by the strong expressions he employed in setting forth the merits of his new plan, provoked scepticism without arousing interest. He excited a sneer, by describing it as equally important with the introduction of gunpowder. While by his vehement and importunate zeal he convinced his officers, who in their attachment to established usage, branded him as a mere innovator, and asserted their conviction, that his schemes, however plausible in theory, would utterly fail in actual warfare. "The new shot," they said, "may perhaps, as a novelty, cause a panic among the enemy, but it will be soon exploded, and like many other boasted improvements will soon be set aside as inefficient."

I have a vivid and a painful sense of the difficulties encountered by my father in bringing forward and calling into general use this new instrument of war, from the vast magazine of papers connected with the subject, which it has been my province to examine and reduce to order. Besides above twenty letters from the Colonel himself, and copies of the replies, I have before me communications with Mr Perceval, the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Castlereagh, Mr Canning, the Earls of Cathcart, Mulgrave, Suffolk, and Moira; Sir Arthur Wellesley, the Count de Materosa, together with Charles Grant, Esq. deputy chairman of the East India Company; Lieutenant-Colonels Robe, Constable, and Sheldrake, and Major Viney of the Artillery.

Among these documents, the first in order is Colonel Shrapnel's original specification of his plan, illustrated with drawings exhibiting the mode of management. Case or canister-shot, had long been considered the most destructive kind of ammunition fired by artillery, but as the case flies in pieces, and the balls diverge immediately on leaving the gun, many of them are intercepted or fall wide of the mark. The range also is limited to 350 yards. Shrapnel's object, therefore, was to increase the range and lessen the divergency. For this purpose he filled a strong cast-iron shell with musket balls, adding a sufficient quantity of powder to explode it, with a fuse in length proportioned to the time necessary for getting within a cer-



tain distance of the object. It would be found, after the experiment order, and with undiminished. The greatest number of balls the longest range 1920 yard grammes wears a formidable. Figures represent three targets foot and horse, all completely explanation is given in the following balls and 84 splinters of the gets, being more than one-third fired from the guns—most of through the targets, which were fifty-four feet long, and nine feet a mounted dragoon), and were fifty yards from each other, in the middle at Woolwich. Ten rounds of each howitzers, four light four light six-pounders, in the produced the above result." the effect of this new projection into a rectangle, or among whole phalanx of infantry, and from the view of the assailants discharged.

In consequence of conversing frequently with this ingenious and of hearing from him all his regiments and disquietudes, the

siastic in his support, and, more than half in earnest, used to designate Shrapnel “the Modern Archimedes.” As the most effectual means of rousing the Board of Ordnance, Sir John, in 1807, proposed at once to bring the subject before Parliament; but no sooner did he inform the Colonel of his intention, than the latter, with patriotic earnestness, entreated him to desist. “I am anxious,” he writes, “that the invention should not be made public in any way whatever, lest its importance should thus be signified to the enemy.”

Amongst the persons of distinction whom my father first interested in Shrapnel’s favour was His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, who, in a letter to Sir John, promises to see the Colonel, and expresses much anxiety “that so valuable an invention should not be lost to the country.”

General Lord Suffolk took up the cause with great zeal; and in a letter, dated Hastings, 19th July, 1808, thus describes two interviews with Mr Canning upon the subject. “I carried with me one of Colonel Shrapnel’s engraved plans of the effect of his shells, with which Mr Canning appeared to be much struck, and informed him such was their utility, no officer now commanding an expedition would sail without them; but that the present Master-General of the Ordnance” (Lord Chatham) “had never seen the inventor, or rather the promoter of them, and had taken little or no precaution for the preparing a sufficient supply of them for the armaments now fitting out. Mr Canning took

some notes on the subject, and as the Cabinet appear to have acted upon some of the principles then stated, I trust that this communication was not entirely without effect." In another letter, his Lordship complains of having been misled by Mr Canning and Lord Castlereagh or Lord Chatham, and declares that he will have no communication with so indolent and irresponsible a Minister. "Some years ago," he adds, "when Lord Chatham was first Lord of the Admiralty, I called upon him at six o'clock, and the servant acknowledged that he was out then stirring."

For my father's letters refer chiefly upon Mr Perceval, to whom he frequently addressed the most urgent applications upon the subject. "I entreat you," he writes, "in every thing you hold dear and valuable, as a man, as a father, and as a British statesman, to bring this subject before the Cabinet." And again, having had opportunity of consulting the Minister, he writes—"On being asked by Mr Pitt what I would have in recompense for the assistance I gave to public credit in 1793, when the Exchequer bills were issued, my answer was, 'establish the Board of Agriculture.' If you were now to put a similar question to me, I should say, 'in justice to the inventions of Shrapnel, and you may yet save Spain and Portugal, and make this country impregnable.'" Mr Perceval, in reply, repeatedly assured Sir John that spherical case-shot should be tried in the Peninsula.

The campaign of 1805 was an important crisis for

Colonel Shrapnel. The Board of Ordnance was prevailed upon to send some of his shells to Portugal, and their efficiency was triumphantly established in the actions of the 17th and 21st of August against Marshal Junot. Colonel Robe, who on both occasions commanded the artillery, writing to Shrapnel, tells him, "Your shot is the admiration of the whole army. I should not do my duty to the service were I not to attribute our good fortune to a good use of that weapon with which you have furnished us. I told Sir Arthur Wellesley I meant to write to you, and asked if it might be with his concurrence. His answer was, you may say any thing you please, you cannot say too much." A similar report was made by Major Viney, who at the same time expresses his regret that only a small proportion of the new ammunition had been provided. "But," he adds, "I am inclined to think that this admirable invention will meet with but feeble opposition in future." The most decisive document, however, to prove the usefulness of Colonel Shrapnel's shell, is the following letter, from the English Commander himself, to Sir John Sinclair, acknowledging the importance of the invention, and desiring that the secret should not at that time be divulged:—

" Holyhead, October 18th, 1808.

" Dear Sir,

" I have had the pleasure of receiving your two

120 SPECIAL CASE-SHOTS—SIR A. WELLESLEY.

It is now I am much concerned that I was not at home when Lieutenant-Colonel Shrapnel did me the honour to call upon me in London. I shall have great pleasure in receiving at any time the great benefit which the Army derives under my command derived from the use of the spherical case-shot in two actions with the enemy—a benefit which, I am convinced, will be multiplied whenever they will be judiciously and extensively used.

I consider it therefore to be very desirable that this invention and the use which the British have made of it should not be made public. Our enemies are not aware of the cause or the effect of our artillery, or which they have contemplated, and we may depend upon it that no public mention or notice of the benefit we have derived from this description of shot would induce them immediately to adopt it.

At the same time I consider Colonel Shrapnel to be entitled to a reward for his ingenuity, and the success he has proved he possesses by the perfection to which he has brought this invention: and more particularly so, because I am of opinion that the public interests require that the advantage which we have derived from the use of the shot should not be made public, and he is thus deprived of the fame and reward which he would have enjoyed.

I am ready to give this opinion whenever it may be required, and to assist by every means in my power, to procure a reward for Lieutenant-Colonel Shrapnel.

“ I have thought proper to trouble you so far upon this subject, as you have expressed so great an interest in it. And I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

“ ARTHUR WELLESLEY.”

Having brought the spherical case-shot effectually into use, Sir John next endeavoured to procure a reward for the inventor. Fulton was understood to have obtained L.10,000 for inventing the catamaran, and Congreve L.1200 a-year, chiefly for the invention of rockets ; whereas Shrapnel received only twenty shillings a-day as a lieutenant-colonel of artillery. His own personal application had been unsuccessful. The Board of Ordnance coolly assured him that they had no funds at their disposal for the reward of merit. The Colonel, with great reason, was loud in his complaints. “ Those,” he says, “ who have used this new weapon of war have titles, honours, rewards and thanks from both Houses of Parliament, whilst the inventor who put it into their hands remains unheard of.”\* Among the friends whom my father consulted, there was a great difference of opinion as well respecting the amount of remuneration to be applied for, as the fund from which it should proceed. Lord Suffolk recommended an application to Parliament for L.10,000 ; Lord Moira preferred a patent for the

\* Letter, dated June 23, 1811.

Europe would have been changed, to your everlasting renown and credit, and the whole world indebted to you for your exertions." And, again, "I have perused your several letters, and feel the highest gratitude to you for your friendly interpositions in my behalf. Much will the country be indebted to you if they take up this fire in earnest and immediately."

In concluding this subject, I need only add, that the shells of this meritorious officer were not only of important use in various actions, but have not been superseded by any later invention. The ammunition for mounted batteries is issued from the Board of Ordnance in the following proportions:—Round shot, forty-four; common case-shot, eight; spherical case-shot, sixteen. To use the words of a distinguished general officer, this invention is "universally acknowledged by military men to have been in the highest degree useful in every operation that has been carried on subsequently to its adoption into the service."\*

A question here arises, Has the country shown a proper sense of gratitude for the services of Colonel Shrapnel?

Among numerous communications from the Treasury to Sir John Sinclair, while Mr Perceval was in office, there is one that will surprise those readers who have not given credit to the House of Lords for maintaining its independence under a Tory Adminis-

\* Letter, dated 3d June, 1836.

believe there is no doubt that if this improper grant should be inserted in the Appropriation Act, it would be rejected by the Lords. The consequences would be serious enough should they only be a prorogation and an immediate new session, but they might not improbably lead to a rupture between the two Houses, of which no one can calculate the result, or easily anticipate the remedy." \*

A motion was made accordingly, three days after, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for separating the grant to Mr Palmer from the general bill, and, after a long debate, was carried by a majority of 123.

During the administration of Mr Perceval, Sir John Sinclair had the honour of being sworn a Member of his Majesty's Privy Council. The appearance of the King on this occasion is described by my father as exceedingly interesting and affecting. The venerable monarch had hopelessly lost his sight, but his deportment was dignified, his recollection perfect, and his desire of useful information undiminished. He made, as usual, various enquiries into the state of agriculture; mentioned with satisfaction the husbandry of East Lothian and Berwickshire as that which he understood came nearest to perfection; and enquired whether wheat could stand the cold and boisterous climate of Caithness. This was the last time my father saw him, a circumstance which added a melan-

\* Treasury Chambers, 20th June, 1808.



greater part of its members. He took for granted, that whoever might be selected, a question affecting vitally the interests of the country would undergo deliberate and impartial examination. Mr Horner, however, as was natural, filled up the list with his own friends, able and ingenious, but speculative men, who commenced their enquiries under a firm and immovable conviction, that no country could flourish with a paper currency not convertible into coin. After examining various merchants, bankers, and dealers in bullion, the Committee, on the 8th June, 1810, published a report, recommending the resumption of cash payments at the old metallic standard (L.3, 17s. 10½d. per ounce), within the space of two years. This report gave rise to the great bullion controversy, which, with some modifications, is to this hour agitated with more or less vehemence among statesmen and economists.

On the appearance of the report, a general alarm was spread throughout the kingdom. Bank of England stock, which in February that year had been at 276, fell in October to 229½; banks began every where to lessen their issues; mercantile credit was shaken, and the Gazette crowded with insolvencies. As the Report was presented at the close of a session, and circulated during the recess, Parliament was precluded from taking immediate steps to disclaim the new doctrines advanced under the sanction of its name.\*

\* See Sir John Sinclair's Address to the proprietors of the Public Funds.

A short account of the argument on both sides, divested of technical phraseology, may enable the general reader to understand, as well as induce him to take an interest in, a question which is commonly regarded as repulsive and unintelligible, the unenvied province exclusively of financiers and politicians.

The first object of Mr Horner and the Bullionists was to demonstrate the fact, that a depreciation had taken place in the circulating paper medium of the country.\* They argued, that although the standard price of gold was £3, 17s. 10½d. per ounce, its market

\* The word depreciation may be used in very different senses, according to the standard with which money is compared. First, a guinea, or sovereign, may be defined to be "a certain weight of gold of a certain purity;" and is depreciated, when either the weight or the purity of the metal is diminished by alloy or otherwise. Secondly, a guinea, or other metallic medium, may be defined, according to the words of Adam Smith, "a draft for a certain quantity of commodities upon all the tradesmen in the neighbourhood." As compared, therefore, with this latter standard, namely, the general level or value of commodities, a guinea, or sovereign may be considered as depreciated when prices rise, and when, consequently, it becomes a draft for a smaller quantity of commodities than before. Depreciation, in this latter sense, may take place in various ways, as, for instance, when the precious metals become more abundant; when the coin is lessened in weight or fineness; or when paper, or any other substance, is introduced as a medium of circulation. I may add, that paper money is subject to a farther source of depreciation of this second kind, namely, want of public confidence, or the prevalence of doubts in the public mind as to the solvency of the parties issuing it, whether a government or a bank. Hence in part originated, in modern times, the depreciation of American bank-notes, and of French assignats.

price, during the preceding year, had been fluctuating between L.4, 9s. and L.4, 12s. per ounce ; in other words, the market price had been about fifteen and a half per cent above the mint price. A corresponding enhancement, they contended, had taken place in the price of silver, while the rate of exchange with various parts of the Continent led to the same conclusion, being from sixteen to twenty per cent below par.

The next object of the Bullionists was to trace the depreciation thus established to an over-issue of paper money by the Bank, subsequent to the suspension of cash-payments. For this purpose they showed, that in 1798, the amount of notes issued by the Bank was 13,334,752, whereas, in the month of May, 1810, it had increased to 21,249,930. This large augmentation of paper-currency, they insisted, was the more redundant, because it was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the issues of country banks, which were emboldened to multiply their paper proportionably to the facility of obtaining notes from the Bank of England. The latter notes, it was affirmed, were the basis of the country circulation, and the superstructure might be heightened in proportion to the breadth of the foundation. Nor was this all, for in the metropolis various improvements which lessened the necessity for money had been adopted in the mode of adjusting commercial payments ; such as an increased use of bankers' drafts, the contrivance of a common receptacle (the clearing house), where such

instruments might be taken  
 other, and the intermediate of

Having then, as they con-  
 sidered of money to the over-  
 Huxley and his Committee ]  
 on the impolicy of permitting  
 violent speculation was cause  
 of prosperity produced, which  
 the harbinger of embarras  
 Above all, unless the public  
 each payment would within  
 named, all confidence in the  
 destroyed, and the country  
 bankruptcy.

In these statements and di-  
 clarations, in one of his at  
 pamphlets, entitled "Observe  
 the Bullion Committee." I  
 with some objections to the fi-  
 report, and pointedly animad-  
 verberate, the contempt for di-  
 and the disregard of the in-  
 produced, with which that is  
 been drawn up. He denies  
 depreciation of the currency  
 issues that bank-notes were  
 pecuniary transactions, and a  
 various intelligent practical  
 the Committee that they were

depreciation alleged. He enumerates various temporary causes to which the unfavourable state of the exchanges ought to be attributed ; in particular, the large remittances sent in bullion to the Peninsula for the support of the army, and the strong measures of Napoleon to exclude British manufactures and colonial produce from the Continent. He quotes from the report itself the opinion of able witnesses, that the rate of exchange had not been rendered adverse by the state of the currency, and exhibits documentary proof, that in point of fact, the exchanges were very far from having risen and fallen, according to the amount of paper in circulation. He contends that the quantity of paper could not be excessive, since the bank only issued notes when wanted, either for the accommodation of the Government or of commercial men, who could give adequate security. He argues, that a continual augmentation of the circulating medium was required proportionably to the increasing quantity of labour to be paid for, of revenue to be collected, and of marketable commodities to be distributed throughout the country.

With reference to the assertion of the Committee, that the prosperity which, with evident reluctance, they acknowledge had resulted from the paper system, was unsubstantial and delusive, he asks whether exports had not increased since the suspension of cash payments from thirty millions to fifty, and imports from twenty-three to thirty-six ? Whether the public

revenue had not advanced from nineteen millions to fifty-nine, and whether the price of stock had not risen from fifty-eight to sixty-two? Could that prosperity, he demands, be shadowy and perishing, which caused every branch of industry to flourish, and brought substantial comfort to a whole nation? Country labourers, it was said, were an exception; but their comfort, he insists, depended not on having occasionally high wages, but on having a regular and constant demand for their labour, for which demand the best security was an abundant circulating medium. Nor was the assertion true that the credit of the existing monetary system was in any danger. It had such a powerful hold upon the confidence of the country as not only to have stood the severe test of vast expenses and subsidies abroad, but also, what was far worse, to have outlived the insinuations, forebodings and attacks of able and ingenious theorists at home. But, above all, he urges that an attempt to resume cash payments within two years was alike *impossible* and *ruinous*; impossible, because gold could not be had to supply the wants of the country; and ruinous, because industry would be paralysed, the revenue diminished by one-half, loans no longer negotiable, and our establishments, both military and naval, reduced of necessity to so low a scale as to leave the country open and defenceless to an enemy, powerful, victorious, and implacable.

Sir John presented a copy of his pamphlet to the

Prime Minister, who returned it, with this gratifying communication ;—

• “ Ealing, 9th Sept. 1810.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I have lost no time in running over your pamphlet, which I thank you for having permitted me to peruse. It has given me great satisfaction. I have not had time to pay that attention to it which I could wish, but I have noticed in reading it some circumstances which I submit to your consideration. You will find them in the margin of the pamphlet. I am, my dear sir, yours most truly,

“ SP. PERCEVAL.”

The copy here referred to is now before me, blotted over in different places with hastily-written additions and corrections. Two specimens of these notes may interest the reader. To the statement in p. 44, he subjoins,—“ Consider the means which it would put into the power of Napoleon, if not to enrich himself at our expense, at least to produce the most alarming evils to the country. His emissaries might contrive to get into their possession numbers of the notes of the Bank of England, and employing them not for the purpose of circulation, but of direct pressure on the Bank, might bring at last the Bank itself into distress and difficulty ; and, by shaking the foundation of public credit and confidence, dry up at once the

sources of commercial, agricultural, and financial prosperity, and render the burden of those expenses which are essential to our security, utterly impossible to be maintained."

In a note on p. 51, he asks,—“ If the restriction were removed, can the advances now made by the Bank to the Government, and which are found to be so essential for the public interest, be continued? No! The Committee are aware that they cannot. They suggest the necessity of reducing the advances to Government, in preference to abridging the discounts to the merchants. They coolly state” (p. 28), “ under such circumstances, it belongs to the Bank to take likewise into consideration how far it may be practicable, consistently with a due regard to the immediate interests of the public, rather to reduce their paper by gradual reduction of their advances to Government, than by too suddenly abridging the discount of the merchants.”

The reception of this tract by the public was not less favourable than by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A number of merchants in the city of London transmitted to the author their acknowledgments for the timely service he had done the country by the publication; and requested permission to publish two editions, one in English, for the chief commercial cities both at home and in America, and another in French, for circulation on the Continent. Lord Moira, on receiving the pamphlet, wrote with his own hand a



letter containing twenty-four quarto pages, explanatory of his views on the subject, which, with some trivial differences, coincided with Sir John's. Towards the conclusion, he thus animadvert upon the rash experiment recommended by the Committee,—“The most solid objection to such a currency” (paper not convertible into coin) “is, that it *may* receive a sudden check ; that the paper *may* become discredited, and that the poorer holders of it *may* thereby suffer a dreadful loss. What then shall we say to the policy of those, who, by way of guarding against the contingent evil, endeavour forcibly to produce that very shock at the present moment ? It is an infatuation beyond example. The utmost vigilance and efforts of Government ought to be applied to renew the confidence and extent of paper circulation, without an hour's delay. If this be not done, it is not alone the commercial class at home that will suffer, but an immediate inability to provide for our armies and fleets abroad will be the certain consequence. These observations will satisfy you that I have fulfilled your desire of perusing, with all the attention so important a consideration demands, the able and instructive statement which you have sent me.”

“Your pamphlet,” says Sir John Macpherson, late governor of Bengal, “has come forth most seasonably to prevent much mischief. The Bullion Committee ought to thank you for it, though they will not. They are not aware that the whole design

On the 6th of May, after Parliament had met, the Report of the Committee was taken into consideration, and resolutions embodying its principles were proposed by Mr Horner, in a speech of great eloquence and ability. The debate lasted four nights, when his resolutions were rejected by a large majority. The division on the sixteenth, and last resolution, for resuming cash payments within two years, was—ayes, 45 ; noes, 180. Majority, 135.

On the 13th May, Mr Vansittart moved a series of counter-resolutions, which occasioned a debate of two nights. The whole subject appeared to have been exhausted, when Sir John Sinclair rose and delivered a most effective speech, containing a variety of new arguments and illustrations. This was the last, of any consequence, he ever made in Parliament. Having already given a general view of the question, I shall not introduce any analysis of his reasoning, but content myself with one or two short quotations.

Referring to an invidious allegation that he had changed his mind upon the subject, and that, in a tract published so long ago as 1797, he had expressed anxiety to re-open the Bank of England for cash payments, “ It is absurd,” he says, “ to contend that the opinions of men, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, should be perfectly unalterable ; and that no change of circumstances, no further experience, no new and decisive facts, should make any impression on the mind of one anxious to ascertain the truth, and

Napoleon to the dust? And shall we submit ourselves to a ferocious, and to a conquered enemy, merely to please a band of speculative politicians, the Midases of modern times, who wish to convert every thing they touch into gold; who seem to care but little what experiments they try with the prosperity of the country, provided they can gain a petty triumph, by effecting a reduction in the price of their favourite metal, or by diminishing, by a few groats or stivers, the rate of our exchange; who, contrary to the evidence that was brought before them, and in opposition to the knowledge and to the conviction of so large a proportion of their fellow-subjects, ventured to report to this House some months ago, that our currency was depreciated, and still persist in maintaining so groundless an assertion? But how does it appear that our currency is depreciated? Is it not received as value in all pecuniary transactions? Will it not procure every necessary, every comfort, and every luxury of life? With a sufficient quantity of notes of the Bank of England, cannot the holder of them purchase the most magnificent mansion-house that can be erected, with all its furniture and decorations? Or will they not be received in exchange for the finest, the largest, and the best-conditioned estate that the kingdom boasts of? And yet our currency is depreciated! Whence can have originated this perversion in the ideas of these modern Midases? With what delight would the Phrygian sage have witnessed the deliber-

sions of the Bullion Com-  
 missioners, some of the wei-  
 ghty arguments in their many re-  
 ports, that a dip in the The-  
 treasure, would prove an effe-  
 ctual remedy, as Mises fi-  
 he was immediately interested  
 therein. I hope, at any rate  
 as and put in these Phrygian  
 Mithras system of the Com-  
 missioners, numerous letters  
 speak. I choose the following  
 words:

— Having

— It is impossible, my dear  
 friends, to make me in the  
 position of a man, or more con-  
 sidering that you have done so  
 I have said it with equal satis-  
 faction. I am perfectly persuaded  
 that they are correct. They are  
 reasonable men. I am in  
 reading it now, as it has been  
 expressed which the news-  
 paper has been given. Ministers  
 do not see such support as you  
 will see like it. You should

transmit an exemplaire to His *Imperial and Royal* Majesty for his private perusal.

“ Always your devoted and faithful servant,

“ N. W. WRAXALL.”

This speech was afterwards published at the request of Mr Vansittart, now Lord Bexley. It was, indeed, with unmixed satisfaction that my father always reflected upon his opposition to the Bullion Committee. Subsequent events confirmed him in his original views. “ If the panic in 1825,” he often said, “ had occurred in our struggle with Napoleon, Great Britain would now be a province of France.”

Early in the year 1811, the plan of issuing Exchequer bills to re-establish commercial credit was a third time resorted to, and with the same success as in the preceding instances. A letter from Mr Perceval is now before me, requesting Sir John to become one of the Commissioners. “ I am anxious,” says he, “ that this Commission should have, as far as it can, all the advantages which belonged to the former, and especially the benefit of that experience which the management of that Commission must have given to those who acted under it.” The sum voted was six millions, but a much smaller advance was sufficient to restore confidence.

As I am now approaching the conclusion of my father's political life, I may remark, in this place, that

although I have referred in my preceding chapters to a variety of useful measures, promoted or introduced by him in the House of Commons, I have been able to bring forward a small portion only of the public business in which he was engaged. Perhaps the best idea of his activity as a senator may be gathered from the fact, that he took an active part, nearly at the same period (1806), in no less than eleven Parliamentary proceedings, namely, the Committee on Highways and Broad Wheels, the Catwater of Plymouth Committee, the Scotch Canal and Road Bill, the Scotch Forfeited Estates Bill, the Scotch Exchequer Committee Bill, the Draining Tile Bill, the Scotch Distillery Bill, the Nabob of Arcot's Bill, the Stage-Coach Bill, the Caithness Road Bill, and the Bell-Rock Lighthouse Bill.\* Of the last-mentioned bill, he was requested to take charge in the Committee, owing to the illness of the Honourable Henry Erskine, then Lord Advocate of Scotland. Much opposition to the measure had been already offered, and more was apprehended; but Sir John had the satisfaction of presenting a highly favourable report;

\* I perceive, that at one period Sir John held the following public situations: Commanding Officer of the Camp at Aberdeen, President of a General Court-Martial sitting there, Colonel of two regiments of Fencibles, a Director of the Bank of Scotland, Chairman of the British Wool Society, Lord Provost of the Royal Burgh of Wick, a Director of the British Fishing Society, Commissioner for the issue of Exchequer Bills, Member of Parliament for Caithness, and President of the Board of Agriculture.

no objection of any consequence was raised, and the bill passed without farther difficulty. To commemorate his services, in promoting this great national work, a portion of the reef was termed "the Ulbster ledge," by Mr Stevenson the engineer.

I may also mention here a bill for a literary object, which Sir John was solicited to conduct through the House, the bill, namely, for the improvement of the Royal Institution. Indeed, whenever a society was to be formed for any useful purpose, literary, philosophical, or benevolent, it found in him a zealous and indefatigable promoter. At the busiest period of his life, he found time to take an active part in the establishment of two insurance companies, the Rock and the Globe, conceiving that individuals possessed of incomes for life had no sufficient means of providing for their families.

My father's speech on the Bullion Question, as I have already noticed, was the last of any consequence delivered by him in Parliament. The vast expenses incurred during his political life, the rejection of his Indian claims, and the consequently embarrassed state of his private affairs, which attention to the public interest had led him to neglect, induced him to accept, in July 1811, the office of Cashier of Excise in Scotland—an appointment incompatible with a seat in the House of Commons. The emoluments of this office, in the days of his predecessor, Sir James Grant, had amounted to L.4000 a-year, but were reduced, in

the present case, to L.2000—a sum much smaller than the interest of the debt he had accumulated as President of the Board of Agriculture. This situation did not require much sacrifice of time, but the responsibility attached to it was considerable, on account of the large sums of money passing through the hands of the cashier.

Thus terminated my father's Parliamentary career, occupying a long, eventful, and singularly varied period of thirty years, during which both sides of the House had presented an array of talent hardly equalled, and never surpassed in any deliberative assembly. No member ever retired from the House after a more assiduous or more disinterested attention to his senatorial duties. His constant aim had been at once to promote internal improvement at home, and maintain the honour and influence of his country among foreign nations; to diminish the violence of party; and to unite, as nearly as possible, the combatants on either side, in strenuous exertions for the public good; to collect and diffuse useful information, to encourage ingenuity, and reward merit. In the attainment of these patriotic objects, he spared no pains; he cared for no expense; nor did he repine that the great influence which he occasionally enjoyed, instead of being exerted for self-aggrandisement, had been employed in promoting measures exclusively for the public good.



## CHAPTER IV.

**Education of his Family—Removal to Ham Common—Excursions to the Netherlands—Battle of Waterloo—Duke of Wellington—Sergeant Ewart—Emperor Alexander—Final Settlement at Edinburgh—Bullion Question Renewed—Late Sir Robert Peel—Free Trade—Mr Huskisson—Roman Catholic Emancipation—Archbishop Curtis—Bishop Doyle—Duke of Clarence—Parliamentary Reform—Earl Grey—Repeal of the Malt-Tax—Publication of Correspondence—Goethe—Code of Political Economy—Code of Religion—Last Visit to Caithness—George Quinton—Religious Life—Last Illness—Death—and Character.**

I HAVE already mentioned, that my father, after his second marriage, resided in the Canongate at Edinburgh, and removed to the New Town after the death of my grandmother. Here he began gradually to enter upon the cares and duties which encompass the father of a numerous family. In 1811, he had seven sons and eight daughters. Notwithstanding the magnitude and variety of his pursuits, as an author and a senator, he entered with good-humoured cordiality into the little occupations and amusements of even his youngest children. The day of his arrival was looked for with the same lively anticipations in the nursery as in the drawing-room. He was much delighted when the young people invited their com-

panions to the house, and, on such occasions, contributed largely, by games of his own invention, to the happiness of the party.

In the education of his family, he pursued the plan usual at Edinburgh, and required them to attend public schools and classes while residing under the paternal roof, the proper place, as he conceived, for religious and moral instruction. He took a pleasure, beyond that of most fathers, in watching over the intellectual developements of his rising family, and encouraged the humblest of their juvenile exertions in any branch of literature. He gave prizes for the best letter addressed to him during his absence ; appointed subjects for essays, as well as occasionally for verses ; and patronised a family periodical, under the name of *The Spy*, which was read aloud every Saturday after breakfast. When a good thing was said, his custom was to reward the young speaker upon the spot with some substantial token of approbation. To direct attention at an early period to public affairs, as well as to form a habit of ready and fluent expression, he encouraged the formation of a miniature Parliament, in which the different parties at that time figuring in political history were characteristically represented, and all the forms and usages of St Stephens scrupulously observed. The journals of this "little senate" happen to be still extant ; and it is curious, in searching them, to observe, in 1809-10, the fortuitous anticipations of such measures as the

grand alliance against Napoleon, the American War, and the expedition to the North Pole. Here also the merits of public men, and especially of agriculturists, were discussed, and rewards voted them with a liberality unprecedented under the most lavish Administration.

An address, generally in verse, was for some time annually presented to him, containing a review of all his operations, agricultural and political, during the past year, with appropriate condolences and congratulations. Thus, the failure of his experiments in fiorin grass gave rise to some pathetic lamentations, while his success in turnip-husbandry, attested by a gigantic specimen, long preserved upon his table, called forth the most extravagant eulogiums. The framers of these addresses sometimes took the liberty of differing from him as to the details of farming, and the merits of agriculturists. They insisted, for example, that Sir Francis Kinloch, and not Mr Andrew Meikle, should have been rewarded as "the real inventor of the thrashing-machine," and voted a statue to their favourite, which was erected on a great scale opposite the window of the President's library, and reproached his partiality to Meikle nearly till the summer solstice.

The variety of my father's writings, and the number of copies which he occasionally required for circulation, afforded an employment more serious, though less amusing, than that of miniature legislation. All

by turns, and occasionally all at the same time, were his secretaries. Nor did he confine them to mere mechanical exertion, but received, with parental good-nature, the remarks even of his youngest amanuensis. I recollect that, in 1812, he was pleased, rather than offended with myself, when at the age of fourteen, I presented him with a formal series of objections to some positions he had just then published in a pamphlet, "on the State of the Nation."

In 1814 he left Edinburgh, and settled with his family for some years at a villa, to which he gave the name of Ormly Lodge, situated on Ham Common, near London. This change made no great alteration in his habits of life, except that it enabled him to reside more at home. An interesting account of him at this place is given by Mr Rush, the American Ambassador, in his memoirs, to the following effect :

" Sir John Sinclair's conversation was instructive and entertaining. He had the double fund, of a large mixture with the world, and with books, to draw from. Early rising became the topic. He thought it less conducive to health than was generally supposed, owing to the morning exhalations. He had heard of the robustness of the old Saxons, but he doubted if they were as powerful a race, physically, as the English of the present day ; and as to their going to bed at dark, and getting up with the dawn, that, he pleasantly said, was natural enough among a people ignorant of the art of making candles ! In the evening,

a number of visitors arrived from their neighbouring country seats, and pastimes followed, which were promoted and shared by Sir John, whose qualities in private life do not fall behind those that have made him known to his country as a public man and an author. In regard to his literary labours, I may add, that on asking the celebrated agriculturist, Mr Coke of Norfolk, what work might be consulted with most advantage on the agriculture of England, he replied, that he knew of none, by a private hand, better than Sir John Sinclair's.

“ In a conversation with Mr Vansittart, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, I asked him what work was regarded as containing the best account of the British finances. He said it was difficult to arrive at a knowledge of them from any single work ; but, on the whole, he considered Sir John Sinclair's, for the periods it embraced, as the most satisfactory. These are high testimonials.”

The peace of 1814 afforded Sir John Sinclair, in common with many other travellers, an opportunity of visiting the Continent. He was anxious to ascertain the relative prices of grain in Great Britain and the neighbouring parts of Europe ; the causes of any difference of price that might exist, and the means by which such difference, if material, might in future be prevented. He left London on the 23d of February 1815, landed at Ostend, and proceeded from thence to Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, and Breda. The

Flemings, at the time of his visit, were ignorant to what country the Congress of Vienna would unite them. This suspense was unfortunate, as it gave time for the partisans of France, England, Austria, and Holland, severally to declare themselves. On the way from Bruges to Ghent, Sir John heard that the Dutch party had triumphed, and that the Netherlands had been assigned to the House of Orange. "This arrangement," he says, "~~may~~ answer, but will require address and management." He alluded soon after, in a large company, to the rejoicings when the new Sovereign was proclaimed; but a Frenchman angrily interrupted him, "No, sir, this Dutch King is not popular, the illumination was not *donné*, but *ordonné*; don't suppose that Holland and Flanders will be long united."

My father was much gratified to find that the government of the Netherlands had established the very laws, with respect to broad wheels, which he had so long exerted himself to introduce in England. "The Flemish regulations," he says, "appear to be taken from my report, as the chief decree upon the subject was published in 1806; yet, it is remarkable, that the common people term these broad wheels *Malbrouks*, from an idea that they were introduced by the great Duke of Marlborough."

On the 7th of March, having reached the banks of the Leck, on his way to Breda, he was detained by a gale of wind, which prevented the low boats, or barges of the country, from crossing. Here he spent

the evening alone at a wretched inn, and having leisure for a long train of serious reflection, he sketched out a paper, "On the Evidences of the Christian Faith," which he long afterwards matured into his projected "Code of Natural and Revealed Religion."

At the Hague he was presented to the King, and had a long conversation with him on the agriculture of his dominions. His Majesty was anxious for its improvement, and, strange to say, referred to Japan as the best cultivated of all countries. "I understand," he said, "from botanists, that hardly any plants are allowed to grow naturally in the whole empire; they are all sown, and exhibit, on a large scale, the results to be expected from laborious and systematic husbandry."

The traveller dined afterwards with his Majesty, and had the gratification of hearing one of the royal party speak enthusiastically of the Highland regiments, particularly the 78th, which had been quartered at Brussels. "Our people," said he, "parted with them in tears" (*pleurant*).

The Princess Dowager of Orange, to whom he paid a visit, reminded him of their old acquaintance; and the Duchess Dowager of Brunswick, her daughter, to whom he was presented, remembered having danced with him at a ball in Nimeguen, twenty-eight years before.

On the 11th of March, tidings reached the Hague of Buonaparte's escape from the Island of Elba, and

tish farmer in collecting and importing materials to enrich their soil; they were more diligent in destroying weeds; they had discovered a variety of efficient processes for preventing maladies in corn; they contrived to raise flax without impoverishing the land; and they changed the seeds more regularly and systematically than we do in England. The Baronet on his return embodied his remarks in a large pamphlet, entitled, "Hints regarding the Agricultural State of the Netherlands compared with that of Great Britain." The work excited much attention, as great ignorance and misconception had before prevailed in this country on the important subject treated of. The Dublin Farming Society became so anxious to have Flemish husbandry thoroughly investigated, that they employed Mr Radcliffe, author of the *Agricultural Surveys of Wicklow and Kerry*, to make a tour at their expense in the Netherlands, and publish the result of his researches. This intelligent observer continually refers in his report to the "Hints" of his predecessor, to whose diligence and accuracy of observation he takes every opportunity of doing justice.

Along with agricultural knowledge, Sir John brought home political information, which he communicated at an audience with Lord Castlereagh. He strongly urged the necessity of energetic measures, on the part of our Government, for the defence of that country; which was about to become



the theatre of new struggles, by Napoleon, for empire.

The founder of the Board of Agriculture saw strong evidence in the prosperous state of Flemish husbandry, to prove the superior stability of agricultural over commercial resources. Although Flanders had been for centuries the battle-field on which the contending potentates of Europe had tried the strength of their arms, the capital laboriously realized and wisely expended in the improvement of the soil, under the auspices of the Burgundian Princes, remained secure. This circumstance illustrated and confirmed the remark of my father's early master in Political Economy. "The ordinary revolutions of war and Government," says Adam Smith, "easily dry up the sources of that wealth which arises from commerce only; whereas that which arises from the more solid improvements of agriculture is much more durable, and cannot be destroyed but by those more violent convulsions occasioned by the depredations of hostile and barbarous nations, continued for a century or two together; such as those that happened for some time before and after the fall of the Roman Empire, in the western provinces of Europe."\*

A few months afterwards, when the victory of Waterloo had restored the peace of the Continent, the Agricultural Baronet visited Flanders, to institute further enquiries respecting his favourite science, and

\* Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Book III. Chap. iv.

to survey the great arena on which British valour had so recently triumphed. He was fortunate enough to secure the services of De Coster, the guide of Buonaparte on that memorable day, and received from him a variety of interesting details, which he resolved to publish. His method of securing accuracy in this military work, was the same which he so often and so successfully employed in his agricultural researches. He put a number of queries to his informant; took down the answers in writing, and reduced them to the form of a narrative. This narrative was afterwards read over carefully to De Coster, who suggested corrections, curtailments, or additions, and was taken finally to the different stations occupied by Napoleon during the battle, and there re-examined. I have now before me in different stages of advancement the very curious "Relation" thus drawn up.

Sir John, in the course of his journey, became acquainted with Baron Muffling, a Prussian General who fought in the battle, and was afterwards nominated Governor of Paris, during its occupation by the Allied army. The Baron had drawn up a complete account of the campaign, which he intended publishing in German only, but Sir John, conceiving that such an account by a Prussian officer of high rank might be acceptable in England, prevailed upon the General to appoint him editor of an English edition. The work gives a very luminous view of the numbers and

accounts of the armies at the commencement of the  
 campaign: details all the actions in which they were  
 engaged: gives specific replies to eight objections  
 brought against the generalship of the Prussian and  
 English commanders: and concludes with some in-  
 teresting remarks on the peculiarities of the British  
 system. — "In a battle," says the Baron, "there is  
 no army in Europe as equal to the British,  
 and no army more united, discipline, and  
 whose military system is so purely and exclusively  
 adapted to giving battle. On the other hand,  
 there is no army in Europe less experienced in the  
 use of the modern system than the British: neither is  
 the system more practiced in that army. There is  
 no army more to be relied on the possibility of form-  
 ing a corps d'élite in some measure as grenadiers: but  
 on the other hand, should the British army be alone  
 engaged in the general, knowing its weak side,  
 and knowing how to avoid giving battle, unless with  
 some great advantage, it is unquestionable that by  
 the progress of the art of war, the army  
 must be greatly improved."

Sir John having had frequent opportunities in  
 conversation with French and English  
 officers of various rank, Generals Exelmans and  
 Lobau, and Baron Bismarck, derived from them in-  
 formation respecting the conduct of Marshal Grouchy,  
 the movement of the Hyland corps, the attack on  
 the River Sambre, the defence of Hougomont, and

the organization of the French army. These authentic particulars, together with the official reports from the three armies engaged, he introduced in an Appendix to the Baron's work.

While securing a good Prussian account of that ever-memorable engagement, he was anxious that a British narrative of equal authority should be communicated to the public, and for this purpose wrote to the Duke of Wellington, urging him to supply that important desideratum. The answer of the Duke is an interesting document. His Grace appears much annoyed by numerous and hastily written sketches of the battle, got up from imperfect sources of information, to gratify the voracious curiosity of the British public, and condemns the extravagant exultation raised by this achievement, as unaccountable in a nation long accustomed to victory.

“ Bruxelles, April 28, 1816.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have received your letter of the 20th. The people of England may be entitled to a detailed and accurate account of the Battle of Waterloo ; and I have no objection to their having it, but I do object to their being misinformed and misled by those novels called Relations, Impartial Accounts, &c. &c., of this transaction, containing the stories which curious travellers have picked up from peasants, private soldiers, individual officers, &c. &c., and have published to the

favour would be most acceptable, the brave fellow mentioned an ensigncy in a veteran battalion as the object he most desired. My father, accordingly, procured for him the commission from the Commander-in-Chief, and thus in a third instance obtained promotion for deserving soldiers.

In 1814, when the Allied Sovereigns visited Great Britain, Sir John Sinclair, on the 21st of June, had a private audience of the Emperor Alexander, at the Pulteney Hotel. "He was dressed," says my father, describing the interview, "in a green uniform; his countenance was open, pleasant, and good-humoured; his whole appearance manly and interesting. He did not seem the least affected by all the fatigues he had undergone, though I saw him the morning after the grand ball at White's. He understood English, and spoke it without hesitation, but preferred conversing in French.

"He said, on my entrance, that he was happy to make the acquaintance of one who had paid so much attention to agriculture. When I mentioned that I had once the honour of seeing his Imperial Majesty at St Petersburg, he asked if I should have known him now? To which I answered, 'That it was in the year 1786, twenty-eight years before, when he was only about nine years of age, and that the change since was very great.'"

After some conversation on hemp and flax, during which the Emperor indicated his patriotic interest in

Warren Hastings, to whom he made this remark, took a very different view of the subject. He insisted that curiosity to see new sights and to acquire new ideas, was a decisive mark of superiority, both bodily and intellectual, in a nation. "I remember," said he, when I was going up the Ganges with great pomp as Governor-General of Bengal, the natives of the lower province, a dull and feeble race, breathing a humid and unwholesome atmosphere, hardly took any notice of us; but no sooner had we reached Bahar, an upland district occupied by a stout and manly people, than the banks of the river were crowded with the inhabitants; and at Patna, the capital, not a window, terrace, or balcony remained unoccupied while the fleet was gliding by."

On the Restoration of Louis XVIII., Sir John Sinclair's Highland enthusiasm led him to suppose that an opportunity had occurred for the institution of a Celtic corps in imitation of the Scottish guard, which, in ancient times, had served the French monarchs with so much courage and fidelity. He had no desire that his projected corps should be composed of Scotsmen, but wished it to be raised in Brittany and other provinces inhabited by the descendants of the ancient Celts, and to be clothed in some modification of the Highland dress. Such a guard would, he conceived, be more popular, and not less trustworthy than a regiment of Swiss. He communicated his idea in a letter to Marshal Macdonald, who,

Some years elapsed before the Marshal found leisure for the excursion here referred to; but at length, in 1825, he paid a visit to the land of his ancestors, and gratified Sir John Sinclair by spending a day with his family at Edinburgh. In the evening a numerous party were assembled, most of whom, in compliment to the distinguished Celtic stranger, wore the Highland dress. Before taking leave he was requested by a young lady to enrich her scrap-book with a specimen of his autograph. He sat down at once, and with good-humoured readiness inscribed the following compliment to his hostess, in the style as well as language of his country:—"J'ai passé

people, whom I am proud to call my countrymen, and glory to have imitated in the career which I have followed. Nor do I feel less pride in bearing a name, and in belonging to a family, who, in common with the other Highland clans of Scotland, have at all times been acknowledged as the bravest among the brave of a generous and hospitable nation; and who are not less distinguished by their elevation of sentiment, their purity of morals, and their rare and incomparable attachment to the service of their ancient sovereigns.

I have now in view to realize my long projected plan of visiting your happy England, and am in hopes of obtaining permission to carry the design into effect this summer, if the public functions which I exercise in France offer no impediment.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your very humble, and very obedient servant,

The Marshal Duke of TARENTUM, Peer of France,  
MACDONALD.

Paris, 19 Nov., 1814.

these gallant fellows, I could have kept the English a whole year at bay."

At Houghbeg, in South Uist, two cousins-german of the Marshal, a son and daughter of his father's elder brother, were presented to him. They were natives of the island, in very moderate circumstances, and could not speak a word of French. He received them with great kindness, and immediately declared how much their short but animated features reminded him of his father. "I once doubted," he said, "whether the reports were true, that I had such near relations; but these are evidently my own cousins. I rejoice to see them; I would have come from France to visit this one island, the birth-place of my forefathers." Understanding that his newly-discovered cousins were not in affluence, he desired Staffa to inform them, that he settled a pension upon them—sufficient, in that country, for their comfortable support, and payable, during his life, on the anniversary of his landing upon the island. The answer of these simple-minded people, to this welcome communication, was delivered in a tone and manner so expressive, that the Marshal, though he did not understand a single word, was much affected by their warmth of gratitude, and drew out a sum of money, saying, "Life is short; my first payment shall be in advance." Before leaving South Uist, he made a pilgrimage to the cave of Corrodale, a place of great importance in his own history, since in that wild



retreat his father first became acquainted with Prince Charles, then an outlaw with a price upon his head, and acquired such an interest in his fortunes as to accompany him to France.

The Marshal afterwards visited Armidale castle in the isle of Skye, the seat of Lady Sinclair's brother, the late Lord Macdonald. The men of Skye understood that a great general on approaching their shores ought to be received with military honours, but were much distressed at having no artillery. Some improvements, however, which were going forward near the castle, suggested to them a good substitute for cannon. A considerable quantity of powder had been provided for blasting a long line of rock near the shore; the people bored above thirty holes of large dimensions, filled this battery with ammunition, and on the approach of their illustrious visitor, saluted him with loud huzzas, and a series of tremendous explosions. The Marshal was at first confounded at this unique salute, but afterwards pronounced it more acceptable than the most regular *feu-de-joie*.

In 1819, my father disposed of his villa on Ham Common, and purchased a house in George Street, Edinburgh, where he principally resided during the last fifteen years of his life. As his family was numerous, he took a passage by sea on board a sailing packet to Leith. During the voyage, his inquisitive mind suffered great annoyance from the difficulty he found in obtaining information as to the progress of

the vessel, and the objects to be seen from it along the shore. Resolving that future voyagers should not encounter the same inconvenience, he caused a small work to be drawn up, containing a chart of the coast, and a short description of the various rivers, islands, light-houses, towns, and harbours, by the way. This useful tract is known by the name of "Reid's Smack Directory."

The visit already mentioned, of Marshal Macdonald to Sir John's family, took place after their final settlement at Edinburgh. I may here also remark, that my father, on all occasions, took peculiar pleasure in the exercise of hospitality to strangers. To enumerate all the visitors he entertained from different quarters of the world would be tedious, and indeed impossible; as the list, to be complete, must contain the names of almost all foreigners of eminence who came to Scotland in his time. I may, however, mention Count Itterberg (formerly Crown Prince of Sweden), the Duke of Brunswick, Prince Schwartzenberg, the Persian Ambassador, Count Orloff, Marshal Bourmont, the Prince de Polignac, and the Duke de Bourdeaux.

Although Sir John continued to reside generally at Edinburgh, he made almost annual excursions to London. On these occasions his usual activity appeared, in the vast number of objects, public as well as private, to which his attention was directed, amounting, in one instance (1829), to no less than twenty-six, all

sing measures equally recommended by their colleagues and by their opponents. To the union of the great political parties which divided the country, were added the unanimous exertions of the periodical and daily press. The influence of reviews, magazines, and journals over the public mind is unbounded ; and almost all zealously inculcated opinions unfavourable to the paper system. As the Baronet strongly expresses himself, “ a kind of *delirium* arose in favour of a metallic currency. Those who supported an opposite system were stigmatized as ignorant and prejudiced men, deficient either in public zeal or common sense, and were almost treated as public enemies.” \*

The chief arguments for the resumption of cash payments may be comprehended under three heads ; namely, that the measure was recommended by *justice*, by *policy*, and by the *facility* with which it might be effected. To the several arguments under each of these heads Sir John Sinclair gave, as he conceived, a complete and satisfactory refutation.

With reference to the alleged *justice* of resuming cash payments at the old standard, he admitted, that injustice had been done to all creditors, public as well as private, when the bank restriction act was originally passed ; but he remarked, that the sufferers from that act endured less hardship than might at first be imagined ; for they paid their own debts in the same de-

\* See Thoughts on Currency, p. 42, and Cobbett's Parliamentary Register, vol. lxi. No. 24, 14th June, 1828.

preciated currency which they received; the debts due to them were paid with greater certainty; the price of stocks rose considerably; and above all, the act by which they suffered was indispensable to the public safety; they lost, indeed, a portion of their property, but the loss was necessary to the preservation of the remainder.

Granting, however, that injustice was done to the original creditors in 1797, how could restitution be made to them by a bill in 1819 for the resumption of cash payments? Very few of them, after the lapse of above twenty years, were likely to be either holders of stock, annuitants, or mortgagees; and it would be a strange kind of moral dealing, to make up for robbing one man by giving a large present to another.

But the proceeding would be worse than absurd; it would be a new robbery. For the old metallic standard, from disuse, had become antiquated and obsolete; it had neither been considered by the nation in borrowing, nor by the national creditor in lending money; still less had it been taken into account by debtors and creditors in private life. On the contrary, had a great and indefinite change in the value of money been known to be impending, monetary transactions could hardly have been carried on at all. The stipulation, therefore, for payment in the precious metals at the old standard, if actually made, became eventually nullified by universal oblivion. For a creditor to insist upon receiving from his debtors

thirty or forty per cent more than had been advanced, under pretence of a deed which both parties had never heard of, or had wholly overlooked, would be the extremity of injustice. "It is a general principle," argues Sir John, "founded on an old and just maxim, *Nemo debet locupletari aliena jacturâ*," that all loans should be paid in money of the same value with the money lent. In France the principle of payments in *argent au cours de jour*, is well known; and there is a striking instance of such a plan having actually been carried into effect in Scotland, in a case exactly similar. By an act passed in the third Parliament of James III. of Scotland, anno 1467, entitled, 'The manner of Debts and Contracts paying,' after declaring that any variations made in Parliament by an alteration of money, are for the common good of the realm, it is enacted, 'That all debtors that owe any debts of contract, shall pay to their creditors the same sums *in substance* as were intended between them before the making of the act.' No principle could be more equitable with respect to transactions either between individuals or with the Government." \* In corroboration of these views, Sir John, alluding to Adam Smith's definition of a guinea as being "a bill for a certain quantity of the necessaries and conveniencies of life, upon all the tradesmen in the neighbourhood," puts the question, would it be just to write on such a bill a larger quantity of

\* See *Thoughts on Currency*, Introduction, p. 7.

ments was recommended by sound *policy*, and that the paper system, as established by the restriction act, could not be permanent, Sir John replied, that a paper currency, not convertible into gold, and at the same time not issued by the Government, which would probably abuse the trust, but by a great responsible corporation, was a discovery of inestimable value, made indeed accidentally, but in its results more salutary than the most elaborate contrivances of political sagacity. Such a currency expanded or contracted itself according to the necessities of trade ; it rendered the country independent of foreign nations for the medium of circulation ; it was not liable to be hoarded or exported ; it saved the vast expense arising from the purchase, as well as from the wear and tear of a metallic currency ; nay, instead of an expense, it might be turned by means of a stamp duty upon notes into a valuable source of revenue.\* These advantages of a paper circulation we might continue peaceably to enjoy ; but if we resolved to have a currency in coin, and to import for that purpose twenty or thirty millions of the precious metals, we should thereby subject our neighbours to embarrassments which would react upon our own commercial credit, and provoke them to retaliate by hostile tariffs and prohibitions upon the authors of their calamities.

\* See Observations submitted to the Select Committee of both Houses, in 1819, pp. 6-17.

to produce further depreciation, Sir John insisted that nothing could be easier than for Parliament to limit so effectually the issues both of the Bank of England and the country banks, as to maintain prices nearly at their existing level. L.50,000,000, for example, might for a long period be the maximum of paper in circulation. Nor, finally, was there the smallest ground for those melancholy predictions with which the advocates of a gold currency were continually endeavouring to alarm the public mind. The same evil surmises, the same prophecies of plagues had been annually repeated for almost a quarter of a century ; but experience had annually refuted them, and would continue to refute them, while a well-regulated paper system was suffered to remain.

Having thus disposed of the arguments deduced from *justice* and from *policy*, he endeavoured to disprove the alleged *facility* of resuming cash payments. The bullionists calculated that the advantages of what they termed a sound and wholesome currency, might be acquired at the cost of a very small inconvenience, and that prices would only fall to the extent of five or six per cent. But Sir John contended that the fall of prices would be far greater, and that instead of suffering a very small inconvenience, the country would be exposed to the most formidable calamities. The difference between the market price of gold and the Mint price had amounted, in 1811, to 15 per cent, and it had since

In the room of a plan liable to such strong objections, Sir John recommended a system, which, as he conceived, would combine all the advantages of a metallic with those of a paper circulation. He advised that the bank restriction act should be continued, not for one year only, but for eight or ten years, or until peace should be permanently established; till the rate of exchange should have been for three years decidedly in our favour; and till the national debt was reduced to 364 millions—its amount when the suspension took place. To prevent the failure of country banks, he urged his favourite plan, that they should be required to give security for their issues, and that large joint stock corporations should be substituted for small companies, whose stability was so precarious, and their failures so widely destructive.\* To prevent, moreover, all further depreciation of the circulating medium, he proposed that the whole amount of paper currency should be limited to fifty millions, one half to be issued by the Bank of England, and the other half by the country banks. Lastly, as a source of revenue, he proposed that a stamp duty upon notes should be levied to the amount of two hundred thousand a-year, to be employed in the internal improvement of the country.

value—*aggravation of ill.*” As applied to money, this was, as my father would have said, a singularly happy definition.

\* “ I am favourable to a system of banking in this country similar to that which prevails in Scotland.”—*Letter from David Ricardo, Esq., 25th March, 1823.*



But our financier, continuing his argument, remarked that there was no necessity for choosing either gold or silver exclusively as a standard. On the contrary, from the reign of Edward III. till the 14th of George III. a joint standard of gold and silver prevailed in England; during the whole of which period, according to the first Lord Liverpool, no objection had been made to that currency. In France and Holland also, and indeed in every country where the currency was free, a double standard was established. He thought it strange, therefore, that when the wisdom of our ancestors had rested the stability of the monetary system upon these two pillars, one of them should be wantonly thrown down. He therefore proposed that the Mint price of silver should be raised to eight shillings per ounce, and that silver jointly with gold should be the standard of value.

When the bill which he so strenuously opposed had passed into a law, and when cash payments were resumed, Sir John Sinclair laboured no less strenuously for its repeal. From year to year, according to the different changes in the aspect of the question, he put forth a series of pamphlets, under various designations, such as "Thoughts on the Agricultural and Financial State of the Country," "On the Means of Arresting the Progress of National Calamity," "On Circulation and Coin," "On the Approaching Crisis," "Remarks on a Speech by the Earl of Liver-

were never able to perceive that the actual root of the evil was deficiency in the means of *distribution*.

His activity and zeal were quickened by the reflection, that every day made a return to the paper standard more difficult, and that much delay would render it impracticable. The paper standard was gradually falling into disuse, and a larger portion of contracts becoming regulated by the metallic standard. To the question what can now be done? his answer was—"Let statesmen do what is uniformly done by prudent men in other professions. Let them retrace their steps. If a physician has mistaken the disease of his patient, and finds him getting worse, does he not change his system? If a general has got into a defile, where, if he perseveres in an attempt to force a passage, his army must be ruined, does he not retreat? Why, then, should statesmen think themselves above the possibility of error, and adhere to a law, which, although enacted with the best intentions, is found by experience to be fraught with the most mischievous consequences?"

Notwithstanding the strong language which he occasionally used in describing the prospects of the country, my father did not at any time give way to despondency. He hoped that various unforeseen circumstances would modify and alleviate the deep and lasting miseries he anticipated. He frequently repeated the maxim of Adam Smith already noticed, that there is "a great deal of ruin in a nation."

Among the chief discour was the insurmountable reluctance of rank and influence, all about a subject so obscure of bullion. The late Marquis declared that he "pinned his secretary" (Mr Peel) "and made up his mind not to self." On receiving certain to currency, the celebrated acknowledged himself "inadequate" giving any answer, but kind were ever bold enough to have one of them, he would take it John Sinclair by stating his conditional promise, as I said. No man knew better than that individual might acquire wealth prevailed upon to study "the

Although very little impression on the English public, except the manufacturers of the midland counties, maintained considerable counter-views of currency in Scotland. One man in defence of its over-tened with destruction by the 1826. At that critical juncture

\* This was owing chiefly to the influence of Thomas Attwood, Esq.

“ On the Paper Circulation of Scotland, proving that the success of the banking-system in that country depends on the circulation of small notes.” He found an able and efficient coadjutor in his friend Sir Walter Scott, whose letters, under the signature of Malachi Malagrowther, made a great impression on the public mind. He afterwards prevailed upon a number of Scottish counties to unite in a petition to Parliament, for the adoption of silver as a standard jointly with gold—a measure by which the pressure of the metallic standard would have been considerably diminished.

My father's correspondence at this time is as gloomy as it is voluminous, amounting to hundreds of letters, in which every term in the nomenclature of human misery and alarm is to be found. Members of both Houses, country bankers, landed proprietors, and farmers vie with one another in their descriptions of the distress and embarrassment around them. One writer deplores the insanity of Parliament; a second, the obstinacy of Ministers; a third, the apathy; and a fourth, the turbulence of the people. Some correspondents describe credit as beginning to totter; others speak of it as already fallen. Some grieve over the decay of agriculture, and paint, in the darkest colours, the poor-rates swallowing up the rents, the fields left without tillage, and the auctioneer, amidst general ruin, becoming rich from his numerous sales of sequestered farm produce. Others, finally, anticipate

is exposed cannot be too forcibly, or too fully represented, and it is necessary to alarm the nation, in order to rouse it from its present apathy." \*

Mr Western, then member for Essex, is not more consolatory than Earl Stanhope.

" 35, South Street, March 4, 1830.

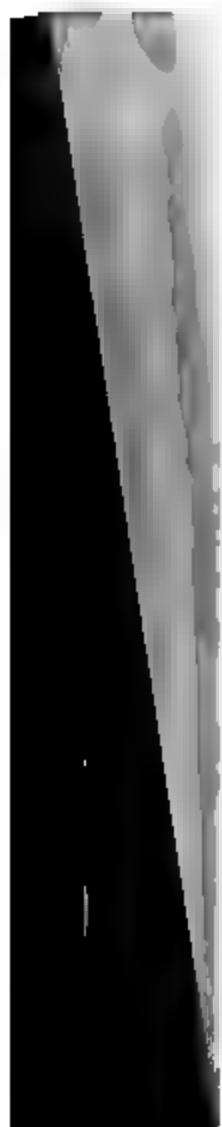
" My dear Sir John,

" I am sorry to say there is no disposition on the part of Ministers or *Whigs* to give way upon currency, and the country is getting into a most FRIGHTFUL state. I never was an alarmist, but I confess at this moment the prospect is to me terrific. The people are (naturally enough) throwing off all respect for authority, and looking only to beat down institutions of every kind, to despoil property, and to crush the higher ranks. *Quos vult Deus, &c. &c. &c.*

" Yours, C. C. WESTERN."

Lord Erskine, as might be expected, mixes jocularity with his gloomy vaticinations. " I fear," says he, " that the proprietors of the soil, by their long acquiescence, have ruined themselves. They are sacrificed to other interests. Unless Lord Liverpool change his measures, the House of Peers will soon be the house of paupers. I never myself have been able to feel the important deterioration of bank paper.

\* Letter, dated March 1822.



I shall here add two letters on the subject, from the late Sir Robert Peel, one of my father's most valued friends, whom he considered a man of sound judgment and real patriotism. It is curious to perceive, from this correspondence, how opposite were the sentiments of father and son on the important subject of currency :—

“ My dear Sir,

“ Your maxims, being drawn from a knowledge of the Constitution and circumstances of Great Britain, command my warm approbation ; and as they cannot be weakened by the powers of reason, they are of too much importance to suffer from the attacks of prejudice under the influence of party feelings.

“ I think with you, that our success as a nation depends in a great measure on arrangements as little connected with other nations as possible ; and as we possess, in an ample degree, the means of comfort and independence amongst ourselves, care should be taken to avoid a concurrence not in the power of the country to control.

“ Why should gold be the only standard of value in governing our domestic intercourse, after, as you with propriety observe, in times of the greatest difficulty, when the energies of the empire sustained and raised us to the pinnacle of glory, without the aid of gold, in carrying on our domestic concerns, to an extent much greater than at any former period of our history ?

“A change from a circulating medium, created at home, to one of foreign extraction, liable to great fluctuations, must, in the event, cripple our domestic concerns, and have a tendency to destroy, what must ever be of vital consequence, national confidence. Gold will ever be duly appreciated in our commercial dealings with foreign nations, but if legal payments are to be confined to the precious metals, or, as the law prescribes, to gold, and protection is to be withdrawn from the Bank of England, regardless of the importance and utility of Mr Pitt’s measure, the want of an available circulating medium, uncontrolled by other powers, will unavoidably cramp the powers of industry, and entail distress on a great proportion of our large population.

“ This unhappy state of things was foreseen and foretold by many persons, and if the measures of government are persevered in, our misfortunes, which are already grievous, will be only in their infancy. I am, my dear sir, yours truly,

“ ROBERT PEEL.

“ Tamworth, January 19, 1820.”

*From Sir Robert Peel.*

“ My dear Sir John,

“ Your esteemed favour of the 8th inst. was delayed by its being sent to Market Drayton. I very much fear you have not been able to incline our Government to take the same view of our currency as yourself.



My reason for addressing men in power arose from a persuasion that the subject had not been duly examined. I considered our distress not to arise from over trading and wild speculation, but from a want of confidence, *generated by the existence of unsound paper money*. To found any proceeding on the impression made on the minds of the Cabinet, might plunge the country into increased embarrassment. The effort made by Scotland to adhere to a tried and successful currency, does you much credit; and if any attempt should be made to make well better, which is not likely, it would not redound to the credit of our rulers. We may, by communicating our sentiments, have some of our suggestions adopted; but I fear no set of men would be commissioned to adapt a circulating medium to our circumstances. I am, dear Sir John, your faithful and obedient servant,

“ ROBERT PEEL.

“ Drayton Manor, 27th April, 1826.”

Nor was it merely with the supporters of his own views that Sir John Sinclair corresponded on the subject of currency. Among his papers are a variety of communications from the most distinguished advocates of the bullion system; from Mr Huskisson, Mr Ricardo, Mr Tooke, Mr Gladstone of Liverpool, Mr Pascoe Grenfell, Mr Kirkman Finlay, and even from the present Sir Robert Peel. To the honour of the last mentioned statesman it should be men-

tioned, that although Sir John openly described the bill which goes under his name, as *fons et origo malorum*, he always treated his father's friend with hereditary regard. The following letter may be given as an example :—

“ London, Nov. 8, 1819.

“ My dear Sir John,

“ I have received your note, and the accompanying publication, which I have read attentively, and for which I beg you to accept my thanks.

“ I am sorry we differ so much on the important subject to which it refers; but you are not one of those who permit differences on public matters to influence their private feelings towards those who have so long been on terms of friendly intercourse as I have been.

“ I have no thoughts of publishing my speech on the resumption of cash payments, as I fear I should only be adding another drop to that ocean of pamphlets in which Voltaire says, speaking of another subject, truth is apt to be drowned. Believe me ever, my dear Sir John, very truly yours,

“ ROBERT PEEL.”

Nearly connected with the question of currency was that of free trade, upon which also Sir John Sinclair differed from the majority of his cotemporary economists. He agreed with Dr Adam Smith, in

the general principle that trade should be unfettered; but, like him, he thought that the application of this principle should be slow and cautious, and should proceed upon a comprehensive survey of existing circumstances. He deprecated the rashness of Mr Huskisson and his disciples; their contempt for vested interests; their indifference to the misery of individuals driven from one branch of industry to another; and their anti-national temerity in desiring to import foreign corn, in order to export British manufactures, thus rendering Great Britain dependent on foreign nations for the most essential article of food. He complained that modern economists had not studied accurately the works of those great masters, of whom they boasted themselves the followers. He pointed out to them, in the writings of the economic fathers, numerous warnings against rashness and precipitation even in applying the best theories. He quoted various high authorities, whose opinions no judicious statesman would venture to disregard, as demonstrating the paramount necessity of moderation and circumspection in intermeddling with the complicated interests of society when arrived at a highly artificial state. "So unfortunate," says Adam Smith, "are the effects of all the regulations of the mercantile system, that they not only introduce very dangerous disorders into the state of the body politic, but disorders which it is often difficult to remedy without occasioning, for the time at least, still greater disor-

tries according to the different circumstances of the case." Again, "These cautions are peculiarly necessary, because the unlimited freedom of trade is extremely apt, by flattering the indolence of the statesman, to suggest to those who are invested with absolute power, the idea of carrying the theory into immediate execution." And once more, "Such theories ought to be considered merely as the ultimate objects at which the statesman ought to aim; the tranquillity of his administration, and the immediate success of his measures, depend on his good sense, and his practical skill; and his theoretical principles only enable him to direct his measures steadily and wisely, to promote the improvement and happiness of mankind, and to prevent him from being ever led astray from these important ends by more limited views of temporary expediency."

One foreign economist was added to these British authorities. "Nothing is more adverse to the tranquillity of a Statesman," says the author of the *éloge* on Colbert, "than a spirit of moderation, because it condemns him to perpetual observation, shows him every moment the insufficiency of his wisdom, and leaves him the melancholy sense of his own imperfection, while, under the shelter of a few general principles, a systematical politician enjoys a perpetual calm. By the help of one alone, that of a perfect liberty of trade, he would govern the world, and would leave human affairs to arrange themselves at

11  
his contemporaries, in cons  
into which he has thrown pu  
lous about submitting quietl  
accuses them of impatience.  
he, are to blame for what th  
the principle continues to b  
same zeal and the same confid

Among my father's corresp  
and agriculture was the late  
whom, notwithstanding the  
their speculative views, he  
friendly intercourse. On o  
wrote to him that he had f  
against the system of free tra  
tending divine service he had  
from which economists of the  
derive a valuable lesson. In  
sacred historian relates that h  
displeased with the people of

tions for a supply of food. Would you reduce the people of Great Britain to the humiliating necessity of supplicating foreign Ministers, in order to preserve themselves from starvation?" By the next post the laconic answer was returned by Mr Huskisson, "that not the authority of Blastus, nor of all the chamberlains who had held the golden key from his time downward, would shake his confidence in the principles of free trade, or induce him to prevent the import of foreign grain."

I have now explained at some length my father's opinions on the two great questions of currency and free trade in corn. His whole views were embodied in a favourite maxim, *that every country wishing to be happy at home, or respected abroad, should endeavour to be independent of foreign nations for circulation and food.* This maxim pervades all his later writings on agriculture and currency. He laboured, indeed, with but limited success, to bring it into operation; but was convinced that sooner or later it would be generally acknowledged as a first principle in economic legislation.

The political history of the revered subject of these memoirs is now brought nearly to a conclusion. Three great questions, however, in which he took an active interest, remain to be briefly noticed:—Roman Catholic Emancipation, Reform in Parliament, and the Repeal of the Malt Tax.

The interest which Sir John Sinclair took in the

welfare and tranquillity of Ireland. In the very early period of his political career, in the year 1782 he became intimate with Father O'Leary, and kept him on the leading topics of the day. Father sent Sir John on one of his works, accompanied by an agent, who, which he threatens to write, and to excite anti-Popish riots under the name of the Rev. The answer to this threat was, and clever, but not impracticable, of conciliatory rather than inflammatory, and con-  
 "What would you say,"  
 announcement of a Protestant measure?"

His work upon the Revue, which, in its place, I had him to enquire minutely into Ireland; brought him into most eminent Irish statesmen, and upon his mind the inquiry, a country so miserably low, so capable of advancement, making a tour of the "Geographical enquires, and to spirit of agricultural enterprise, the portion of the empire, the most cordial invitations

of all parties, various circumstances prevented the execution of his design. In 1810, his acquaintance with Lord Fingal, a Roman Catholic nobleman, at that time resident in Edinburgh, led him to discuss the question of emancipation. A plan grounded upon mutual concession by the Protestant and the Romanist was arranged with his Lordship, which Sir John meant to bring forward in the House of Commons, till he ascertained that other propositions for the same object were more likely to receive support. In 1819, he corresponded on the subject with Mr Grattan, to whom he suggested the propriety of suspending from year to year the penal laws, as in the case of Dissenters, and thus admitting Roman Catholics to a probationary enjoyment of political power. He conceived that the religious jealousies which divided these two parties, and the precarious tenure of their privileges would prevent them from uniting to disturb the peace of the country by a demand of further concessions. When Irish agitation began to be regularly organized, when a Catholic Association was formed, and a Catholic rent collected, he was of opinion, that either some legislative settlement of the question must be effected, or civil war must follow. He renewed, therefore, his former proposition, transmitted it to leading men on both sides, and recommended, at the same time, that a permanent and compulsory commutation of tithes should immediately be enacted upon the plan adopted



by Charles the First in Scotland : that a provision should be made by Government for the Roman Catholic clergy : that public money should be advanced for making roads, bridges, harbours, and canals in Ireland, with a stipulation that the parties to be benefited should bear half the expense ; and that measures should be adopted for enabling the redundant population to emigrate and establish themselves in new countries.

The replies which my father received to the first of these suggestions give a very curious insight into the state of public feeling in Ireland at that important crisis. His scheme of pacification, it would appear, was not acceptable to either party, although it was less objectionable to the Roman Catholics than to the Protestants. The event, he thought, placed in a strong light the ignorance and the prejudice of both parties. The Protestants did not anticipate that a much stronger measure would be immediately proposed and carried by the Duke of Wellington—a measure far more likely to divide and ruin the Protestant interest. As many individuals, both in and out of Parliament, who had pledged themselves to oppose extreme and final concessions, might, without inconsistency, have assented to an experimental proposition. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic prelates notwithstanding their great ability and long experience, showed that they knew nothing either of their opponents or of their supporters, otherwise they

would not have taken for granted that the latter would be satisfied with emancipation, nor have cherished the preposterous suspicion, that the former might resist by force an emancipation act, or suddenly rise in arms to massacre their Popish brethren.

*From Lord Redesdale.*

“ Batsford Park, Sept. 7, 1828.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I conclude, from the forbearance of the Irish Government, that they have been advised that the collection of the Catholic rent is not illegal. If it is considered as a *voluntary* contribution, I apprehend it is no more illegal than collecting a subscription for a bridge, a road, or other work, or for a work of charity. If not *voluntary*, the threats used to extort it might render the collection illegal. If professed to be applied for an illegal purpose, the purpose may render it illegal.

“ Under the Irish law, Mr O’Connell may practise at the bar without taking the oath of supremacy, taking the oath required by the Irish act.

“ With respect to Ireland generally, and with regard to the Catholics particularly, the Government of Ireland has at all times been very ill conducted. As the Attorney-General of James the First said, ‘ Ireland was never fully conquered, and was never made duly obedient to law. When the constable

[illegible]

you must no longer coquet with the Catholics, but say—‘ This I will do, and no more.’ ‘ Take what I offer, or not, as you please.’—All the Catholics of property would take what was offered, and the priests and agitators would refuse, and then the question would be whether the Catholics of property, or those of no property, were to rule.

“ The whole business, as managed by every government for many years, has been a tissue of folly ; and Ministers seem never to have collected any wisdom from what has happened. The world at present is enjoying the benefit of the march of intellect, which has been (perhaps truly) called ‘ The Rogue’s March.’ Dear sir, truly yours,

“ REDESDALE.”

*From the Earl of Hardwicke.*

“ Scarborough, 7th October, 1828.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I received yesterday your letter of the 1st instant, enclosing a printed paper relating to the Roman Catholic question ; and as the circular letter contains also a private note in your own hand, I lose no time in acknowledging it.

“ It has never appeared to me that any negotiation or adjustment with the Pope would be of much importance in the settlement of this question ; though I doubt not he would be ready to give every assistance in his power consistently with what he might

think due to the Roman Catholic Church. The main question is, shall the Peers of that religion, consisting of seven or eight persons, who have an hereditary right to sit in the House of Lords, and upon whom, therefore, the grievance presses the most heavily, continue to be excluded from it on account of their objection to take certain oaths (no longer necessary), and to subscribe their disbelief in transubstantiation; and shall the laity of that persuasion be excluded from seats in the House of Commons for the same reason; the right of voting for representatives in that House having been given to Roman Catholic freeholders in Ireland, and refused in England, though in the latter country they are few in number, and have always been perfectly quiet; and in the other, in both respects the reverse? If anything is to be done for the clergy, which is certainly desirable, some arrangement must be made with the Pope; and possibly it might be thought right to follow that which was proposed by Lord Castlereagh in 1815, if the clergy would now agree to it, as they did at that time. Unfortunately the plan was then overruled; and every attempt since to bring the question to a favourable issue, has been too successfully opposed in the House of Lords. Even the motion which passed the House of Commons to allow the Peers to sit and vote, was negatived in the House of Lords; for though it was agreed to by a majority of eight of the Peers present, it was ultimately thrown out by

a majority of four, by the proxies of absent Bishops. This detail of facts is, I confess, no answer to your desire of receiving useful hints for promoting the desirable object of bringing the question to a final issue. How this is to be done without a change in the opinions and votes of many who have hitherto opposed the measure, I am at a loss to say. If such a change should be brought about by time and circumstances, it would be a fortunate event ; and I have no idea that it would endanger the establishment of our Protestant church.

“ In reference to what you say in the printed paper enclosed in your letter, some useful hints might possibly be drawn from the concordat between the King of the Netherlands and the Pope, though there is this difference between the two cases, that in a considerable part of his dominions the established religion is Roman Catholic. I remain, dear sir, your obedient and faithful servant,

“ HARDWICKE.”

*From Lord Stourton.*

“ Allerton Park, near Wetherby, 10th Oct. 1828.

“ Dear Sir John,

“ I duly received the newspaper you were so obliging as to send me, and beg you will accept my thanks for it and the accompanying letter. It is to me astonishing that this country, otherwise so advanced, and taking its natural lead in all liberal institu-



*From the most Reverend Archbishop Curtis.*

“ Drogheda, 22d October, 1828.

“ Dear Sir,

“ On my return a few days back from the visitation of this diocese of Armagh, to my residence here, I had the honour of receiving two communications from you of the 7th and 30th ultimo, containing some thoughts on Catholic emancipation, which have since been proposed, and recommended by you in the newspapers to the consideration of the public at large, for the purpose of persuading the contending parties for and against that measure, to come to a compromise, by yielding up or sacrificing something on each side, which you look upon as the only sure means to obtain the desired boon, and to avoid a civil war, so much to be otherwise dreaded as the almost necessary consequence of the alarming state of exalted party feeling in this country at present.

“ These liberal and philanthropic views and exertions do great honour to your head and heart, and justly claim our grateful acknowledgments; a tribute that, for my own part, I most cheerfully pay, and with all sincerity beg leave to assure you I shall ever be anxious to adopt—nay, I think it my bounden duty to promote—by every lawful means in my power, such pacific and conciliatory measures as may appear reasonable, and conducive to the vitally interesting ends you mention.

“ But permit me, *in limine*, to request that, with



by you, we could hope to obtain any relief; for the substance of all the conditions you propose, and a great deal more, has been already expressed by us, and repeatedly presented to the Legislature and to Government—(pray take notice)—by the petitions and bills put forward in our favour, by the solemn declarations published by the entire body of British and Irish bishops, and by the detailed and rigorous oaths formed and proposed by the Legislature itself, and freely taken and sworn by us all, bishops, clergy, and laity, and comprehending every thing that even the most unjust misrepresentation ever attributed to Roman Catholics, under the wretched pretext of their holding the inoffensive tenet of the Pope's supremacy in spiritual or religious matters alone.

“ This being then manifestly the case, how could you seriously propose to me, an octogenarian Roman Catholic Archbishop, that we should abjure the Pope's power to depose our King to absolve his subjects from their allegiance to his Majesty, or to meddle directly or indirectly in the civil affairs or government of his kingdom? You were, or should have been, perfectly aware, that all this and much more, had been already done by us, in the most authentic manner, and in the very terms prescribed by the Legislature and Government, who consequently appeared perfectly satisfied on the subject, and could only blame themselves, not us, if any thing neces-

sary on that head still remained to be done, which was not the case.

“ Well but, you say, after all, some concessions must be made on both sides, or there can be no emancipation. My own firm opinion is, and I wish I could get the Catholics to adopt it, namely, that said emancipation is a contemptible thing, and not worth the tenth part of the struggle, labour, expense, and irritation it has cost already, and is likely still to be attended with ; its value is quite mistaken and overrated, as it can really do very little good or harm on either side. Yet not this, but the very reverse, is the general opinion, and as the world is governed, even in its highest affairs, by such chimeras, I should not be surprised that this also should have its day, if it were not taken up, on all sides, as a matter of the first importance, for or against which, immense numbers, calling themselves reasonable men, and even Christians, are ready and willing to sacrifice the lives and fortunes of their opponents, and to expose their own.

“ You talk of bringing such people to a compromise by yielding mutually something to each other. You seem, then, to suppose they proceed bona fide, and may be induced, at least, to treat peaceably on the business ; but that is far from being the case. The Orangemen, Brunswickers, and Co. will not grant emancipation on any terms ; and if it should pass against their will, they threaten to disown such

law, and those that make it. The answer commonly given by Catholics is, that as they ask for nothing that belongs to their fellow-subjects, nor seek to deprive them of any of their rights, but only to be allowed the same, they find it impossible to conceive how they can, with justice, be called upon or condemned to yield or pay a purchase or fine, for what is generally allowed, by the unprejudiced, to be their due, which they should have long since obtained, as they did many other more important rights, that had also been long withheld. If it should be pretended, that nothing more is required from Catholics than to secure Government they will not abuse the concession, if made ; they have never refused, but will be always ready to give Government any such reasonable security in their power, though neither they, on former occasions, nor have the dissenters latterly, been obliged to give any such securities. If it be wished that the boon should be received with gratitude, it should not be marred by any clog, which might be much more annoying than the yoke that was sought to be removed.

“ I have the honour to be, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

“ + P. CURTIS, R.C. *Abp.*”

*From the most Reverend Archbishop Curtis.*

“ Drogheda, 27th Nov., 1828.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I am honoured with your very friendly letter

in the first instance, enclosing and recommending a  
 petition for your new Circular, or Plan, for settling  
 the Irish Question, which you hope may serve  
 to settle the matter by granting Emancipation to  
 the Irish in the year, at first, as it were, on an  
 experimental plan, to be renewed from year to year,  
 and so a more gradual and time should fully  
show to the Irish that would soon be the  
best that could be done and the consequences would follow  
that the Government is at present  
in possession.

The Government must be shown, and even ap-  
 pealed to, as being very simple, clear, and easy  
 to understand and execute. It has, besides,  
 the advantage of showing that you, as the result of  
 the present circumstances—and I think that but few of  
 the Irish will have it that is not serious con-  
sideration that the Irish majority of Irish will raise  
the question as against it.  
 The Government will therefore ask, if such  
 a measure is not in accordance with any certain  
principles of the Constitution, or is it  
 not in accordance with the Constitution of the United  
Kingdom in any other part of the Constitution, or  
 not in accordance with the Constitution of the United  
Kingdom in any other part of the Constitution, I  
think that the Government will ask you, but  
not as to the Irish in your name; and with-  
 out any other reasons and similar reasons are generally  
violated in the Constitution, or any other law

schemes for building castles in the air. This must still more be the case at present, as, during the last month, we are assailed in all the public papers with threats that no emancipation will be granted or offered, unaccompanied with a tail of wings, securities, and conditions, little suited to your naked plan, or to the expectations and resolves of the Irish Catholics. These will also say, that one year would be quite too short a period, and that five, or even seven years at least would be required for the momentous experiment proposed by you—nay, they will certainly add, there can be no just reason why the boon of emancipation should not be at once made absolute, as the same sovereign power that might grant, could by a subsequent act repeal or limit it, if, after a fair and sufficient trial, it should unhappily be found that such restraint was indispensably necessary for the public good ; which doleful case you are persuaded would never occur, and I perfectly coincide with you in that opinion.

“ But, on the other hand, the exclusionists, or ascendancy party, will scornfully scout all necessity of any further trial or experiment, as they but too abundantly know already, by woful experience, that Catholics, if admitted to power, however limited, would always employ it to introduce Popery, slavery, &c. &c. &c., for such is the cant; and not content with such compliments, they further declare, they will ever oppose Catholic Emancipation by every



love, under just and equal laws, which may be amply sufficient for all civil and political purposes, but should not by any means extend to, or meddle with, religious tenets, or even the discipline of the Catholic Church, which neither will, nor ought to be, submitted to their direction; and it is in the spirit of a real friend that I take the liberty of advising you to lay aside the intention you announced of proposing a general plan on that subject also, as you may depend it would fail, as all such projects have hitherto ever done. For true religion cannot be made a political engine; and indeed these infidel times are the most unseasonable that could be chosen for such an attempt, which could only mean to induce people to adopt certain forms of language about religion, without having any at all in reality, which seems to be the object of the day. I have the honour to remain, my dear sir, your most obedient servant,

“ + P. CURTIS, *Abp.*”

*From the Right Rev. Bishop Doyle.*

“ Carlow, 4th December, 1828.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have communicated your plan for the settlement of the Catholic question to some of the most intelligent among my friends. I have myself also considered it, but the novelty of the plan itself, and the want of precedents in any way analogous to it,

leave me unable to form a decided opinion on the merits of it.

“ How could members of Parliament or judges be independent under the operation of an annual law? There may be also other offices where the tenure of the occupant should be certain. Perhaps these difficulties might be surmounted, but I doubt whether these alone would offer themselves. I am of opinion that Government could satisfy the sensible portion of the community even now by a general and final adjustment, and might disregard the violent of all parties: for even in Ireland, the great, the vast majority of Catholics and Protestants would, after some declamation to save their honour, willingly acquiesce in any reasonable legislative enactment; and that the same result would follow in Great Britain, it is, I think, not difficult to divine. The great evil to be avoided is the leaving the question open; for so left, it will as certainly as our existence, produce the total ruin of this country, and possibly even of England.

“ I am rejoiced to find that your experiments continue to produce new and useful discoveries. Had we but internal peace and our currency secure, we might begin a new race of improvement. Perhaps a good Providence will so provide for us.

“ With sentiments of the most perfect esteem, and gratitude for your continued solicitude for my countrymen, I have the honour to be, my dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

“ + T. DOYLE.”



*From the Right Reverend Bishop Doyle.*

“ Carlow, 20th February, 1829.

“ My dear Sir,

“ We all have indeed great cause to rejoice that it hath pleased Providence to dispose those in power to establish, if it be possible, religious peace in Ireland. Hitherto no obstacle has been raised on the part of the Catholics to the accomplishment of this great and good work. You will collect from the newspapers that the heads of our clergy have done all in their power to remove a great cause of fear or distrust, by recommending the dissolution of the Catholic Association; and this proceeding of theirs affords a pledge that they are strongly disposed to assist rather than impede the work of peace.

“ They could not do more, unacquainted as they are with the provisions of the intended Act, or Acts of Parliament; nor is it possible for me to inform you as I would wish to do, of the course they will pursue, when a full view of the contemplated measure comes before them. I am certain there is no class of men in the United Kingdom who desire more anxiously to remove all impediment out of the way of a final settlement, and that nothing less than a prospect of danger to the religion of which they are the guardians, would move them to do or say any thing which might embarrass the Government.

“ On the other hand, the Brunswickers here,

though now reduced to a small number, are increasing hourly in violence; and the Catholics in many places apprehend a sudden rising of them to massacre the Papists. I hope these fears are unfounded, but they exist: and nothing can be more deplorable than the exciting language used by the Opposition in Parliament, which repeated here and commented upon, irritates and inflames exceedingly the passions of the vulgar. Let us, however, hope, that He who can say to the sea, 'be calm,' and to the north wind, 'do not blow,' will still these tumults, and enable the Government to perfect what they have so well begun.

"I do not intend going to London this year, though few things would give me more pleasure than to meet you in the midst of the wise and good who surround there, that we might rejoice together, as I hope we could do, at the prospects opening, even this year, on our too-long distracted country.

"I have the honour to be, my dear sir, your most obedient humble servant,

" + T. DOYLE."

*From the Right Rev. Bishop Doyle.*

"Carlow, March 8, 1831.

"My dear Sir,

"I do hope earnestly that the regard with which you have honoured me may not be diminished by any cause. The occasional interruptions of our correspondence cannot affect it, still less can they alter, in

the slightest degree, the exceeding respect with which your kindness to myself, but still more your unwearied efforts to serve this country, have inspired me.

“ I was absent from home for some days past, and on that account did not receive your letter with the accompanying paper till late on Saturday.

“ I am very much of your opinion on the Union Question, as to the difficulty or impracticability of repealing it, and will do all I can to cause the agitation of it to subside. Good measures by Government will quiet the minds of the people ; but if longer neglected, or ill-treated, they could easily be led, in despite of me, and of such as me, to adopt any plans, however absurd, which would hold out to them a hope of relief. My dear sir, most truly and respectfully, your obedient servant,

“ + T. DOYLE.”

*From the Earl of Eldon.*

“ Dear Sir John,

“ I have received and read your publication, entitled, ‘ Thoughts on Catholic Emancipation.’ I am obliged by your attention in sending it to me, but, after recollecting all that I have heard in debate, and read upon the subject of the Roman Catholic claims in the last twenty-eight years, I do not apprehend that the plan suggested in your circulated paper is likely to be adopted.

I am, dear Sir, with great respect, your obliged servant.

“ ELDON.”

“ LONDON, 11th Nov. 1832.”

“ To Mr. John Lubbock —”

“ 11th Nov. 1832.”

“ My dear Sir,

I am extremely glad your letter of the 24th reached me.

It is certainly true that it would not be safe to give to the London Catholics any one more political influence than they at present possess.

The Government of Ireland is kept alive by the opposition which we have put to them, and the more we put to them in their suggestions, the more they will be forced to consider us in their own minds.

There is no advantage in Catholics in Parliament, and it is not worth while to direct them, and that is a point which must be kept in mind, and that is a point which must be kept in mind. If they ever get the power, the time and they will make of it will be to annihilate the Protestant Church in Ireland, and that the loss of the Church which unites the two countries is a disaster. I am, my dear Sir John, your obedient servant.

“ ————”

*From the Earl of ———.*

“ 4th December, 1828.

“ Sir,

“ I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note and papers relating to a proposed plan of conceding all the demands of the Roman Catholics. I will candidly say, I do not approve of it; first, because I think it degrading to Government and to this great nation to be bullied into a compromise by which the disaffected will gain every thing, and the loyal majority nothing; secondly, because I think the proposed plan could not be reduced to practice. No temporary concession can be made; it must be a permanent one. Once the floodgates are opened, the power of the waters overcomes every other obstacle, and the old saying is, ‘possession is nine points of the law.’ The more power is given to the Roman Catholics, the better they will be able to maintain their ground. If it is not safe to give them the privileges they ask, for a permanency, the same arguments oppose the temporary concession. I cannot attempt to develop the reasons at present for not giving what the followers of the Pope now so loudly demand, but I would earnestly refer you to a remarkably talented speech lately delivered by the Rev. Mr Martin, at a meeting of the Brunswick Club in Dublin. I anxiously request you will procure it, and read it with attention. You will find it devoid of

Catholics in Ireland, who have been too long degraded. That island might become the treasure of our empire, and I hope to God it will. Look to what was the state of Scotland till the Earl of Bute most wisely admitted Jacobites into the King's family and service. Who more loyal than the sons of Scotia? Do away in Ireland the disabilities of religion, and the inhabitants of Hibernia will be equally attached to their monarch."

The next important question in which my father took a part, was that of Parliamentary Reform. I have already mentioned, that a proposition for Parliamentary Reform, substantially the same with one previously suggested by him in his "Lucubrations," was unsuccessfully made by Mr Pitt in 1785. The failure of this attempt, joined to the wild theories and sanguinary proceedings consequent upon the French Revolution, appears either to have extinguished the zeal of the Minister for political change, or to have convinced him of its impolicy. The same circumstances proved a discouragement to my father. He also looked upon those who claimed to be the friends of the people as being immoderate in their demands, and regarded some of their complaints as entirely without foundation. During the continuance of the war, therefore, he abstained from agitating the question.

Soon after the return of peace, he again brought forward his plan of purchasing the franchises of the

state of the public mind, the ancient landmarks of the Constitution would be borne down by a torrent of innovation. The Ministry were pledged to bring forward some plan of reform, but he was anxious that, before its production, the subject in all its bearings should be discussed by moderate men, who, although friendly to the cause, were not carried away by the delirium of the moment.

In a tract, therefore, entitled "Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform," he began by laying down three general principles, which, he conceived, should be the basis of constitutional reformation. *1st*, That practical improvement should be aimed at rather than theoretical perfection. "A perfect commonwealth," he observes, "is a visionary idea, never to be realized while mankind are themselves imperfect. Let our efforts, therefore, be directed to the removal of obvious defects in our present system, rather than to the construction of a new government." *2dly*, That demolition is far easier than restoration; that if alterations be carried too far in existing institutions, some wheel indispensable to the action of the political machine may be unintentionally removed, and the mischief be irreparable; whereas further changes are always in our power, and may be afterwards resolved on, should they seem advisable, when the effect of previous experimental measures has been ascertained. *3dly*, Against those who considered the institutions

of copyhold estates, and tenants upon long leases, should have the right of voting in common with freeholders ; that registers of voters should be regularly made up, and that the duration of Parliaments should not be shortened. The plan was more moderate than that subsequently developed by Lord John Russell. The qualification fixed upon was higher, and in the case of county electors arose solely from the *produce of the soil*, so that county members would have been returned exclusively by the agricultural interests.

With the noble head of the Reform Ministry, Sir John had held frequent intercourse during the preceding fifty years, and had visited at Howick in the lifetime of the Earl's father, Sir Charles Grey. With the vivid and 'minute impression of early scenes characteristic of old age, he remembered visiting some ancient castles in the neighbourhood, accompanied by the future premier, who enlarged with much juvenile enthusiasm on "the spirit-stirring" deeds of feudal times, and declared that those were "days worth living for." Earl Grey had opposed the institution of the Board of Agriculture, but subsequently became a member, and when an attempt was meditated to prevent the re-election of the founder as President, kindly intimated his intention to support him. His Lordship was so alive to Sir John's services to the country, not only as an agriculturist and financier, but as a reformer, that, soon after attaining office, he pledged himself to





the concluding political events in my father's history, I return to his literary memoirs, and proceed to notice his three remaining works, one of which he lived to complete, leaving the other two unfinished. In 1831 he published two volumes of his correspondence, with "Reminiscences" of the most distinguished characters who had appeared in Great Britain or in foreign countries during the previous fifty years. He had been induced, some time before, to examine all the letters in his possession, with a view of collecting specimens of autographs. During the perusal of these documents, he discovered such a variety of interesting materials, that he resolved on publishing a selection. This work differs from other epistolary compilations in the variety of characters whose letters it contained, and the number of countries from which the correspondence emanated. A long and interesting account of this publication was drawn up in German by Baron Varnhagen Von Ense for the Berlin Critical Journal. After a short biographical sketch of Sir John Sinclair's life and public services, the Baron thus comments upon the variety of interesting materials in the correspondence. "The greatest contrasts," observes the critic, "the most remote extremes, lie here peaceably together as in a traveller's album. That the eminent men of the author's own department, Arthur Young, Pictet, Adam Smith, Say, Rumford, Thaer, Baron Voght, Fulton, &c., should be all here was to be expected; but in addition to

no more, for although *oppressed* by nothing, I am *pressed* for time, and consequently seldom stimulated to remember the wishes of absent friends.”\*

That department of my father's labours which he designated the Codean System, included, as I have before said, separate works on Health, Agriculture, Political Economy, and Religion. The completion of the two former Codes has been already noticed. On the publication of his Correspondence, he immediately began correcting and arranging materials for the two latter, which he left unfinished.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, and the magnitude, as well as intricacy of the subjects before him, he resolved on carrying on both codes at the same time. The accumulated infirmities of eighty years,

\* “ Weimar, den 5 August, 1831.

“ Sie haben mir durch ihre freundliche Sendung ein sehr angenehmes Geschenk gemacht. Ich hatte vor einiger Zeit den wackern SINCLAIR durch seine zwei Bände treulich begleitet; um einen desto vollständigeren Eindruck musste ihre Darstellung auf mich machen. Gern will ich gestehen, dass ich in dieser den Meister biographischer Kunst gewahr werde, mit dessen Ansichten ich vollkommen übereinstimmend fühle und denke, ohne dass ich mir anmassen dürfte ein solches Werk auf eine so glückliche Weise zu epitomisiren. Noch einen besonderen Dienst haben Sie mir dadurch geleistet, dass sie mich in den Stand setzten, meiner guten Schwiegertochter das Ganze bekannt zu machen, da ich sie mit einzeln, auffallendern, allegemein interessanter Stellen zu unterhalten gesucht hatte. Mehr will ich nicht sagen, da ich, zwar, nicht in bedrängten, aber doch in gedrängten Augenblicken lebe, und deshalb an auswärtige Freunde und ihre Wünsche seltener zu denken angeregt werde.”

however, necessarily prevented him from prosecuting his labours with the same energy as in early life. It had been his custom to work twelve hours a-day, but he now reluctantly confined himself to six. He designed his publication on political economy to be a summary of all his statistical researches for upwards of half a century. To enumerate the various topics in this comprehensive volume, or to describe the manner in which any one of them is discussed, would give no adequate idea of the work. I may remark, however, that in the Introduction he traces the origin and progress of the science, defines the terms employed, and briefly criticises the writings of the most distinguished economists. Throughout the treatise, he steadfastly avoids the prevailing error of over-estimating the importance of wealth. Among the objects of chief practical concern to every statesman, he includes the intellectual, moral, and religious well-being of the people, their advancement in knowledge, in virtue, in piety, and riches of the mind, as well as in bodily and material comforts. He emancipates the divine, the physician, the man of letters, and the magistrate from the disparaging category of the unproductive classes, and by a new arrangement, promotes them to the rank of "useful," or *indirectly productive*. He considers the protection of the people by law, their refinement by science, literature, and the arts, and their moral elevation by religion, as the noblest aim of patriots and princes; the most effec-

tual means of exciting, sustaining, and rewarding industry, even in those departments of labour, which, by way of eminence, are usually styled *productive*.

The classes whom he considers neither directly nor indirectly productive, and whom, therefore, he designates *useless*, are the insane, debtors in prison, the infirm poor, adults living on charity, vagrants, and criminals. To transfer as many human beings as possible from this last or useless class to either of the preceding, to render them directly or indirectly productive, ought, in his opinion, to be an object of primary solicitude to the rulers of a country.

In a letter referring to this work, after having seen the prospectus and general plan, M. Say, the great French economist, remarks:—"You have undertaken a task worthy of yourself, of your illustrious name, and of your mature talents; namely, to trace the path which it is proper to follow in researches of that description; and your success is likely to be more certain, as the organization of political societies has become more improved."

But throughout the whole circle of his numerous and diversified compositions, Sir John Sinclair attached the greatest importance to his contemplated "Code or Digest of Natural and Revealed Religion."

Many of his literary friends objected on different grounds to this title. Some alleged that the term was too lofty a designation. It seemed to imply inherent authority, whereas, strictly speaking, the only

Another sense of the phrase, natural religion, is where the religious reason, deriving a knowledge of

p. 411. I may add, that the religious notions of a savage, *almost* without traditional knowledge of the Godhead, yet speculating on the origin of the world, and on his own final destiny, come very near to an example of a purely natural religion. Two instances are quoted by Professor Stewart in his *Philosophy of the Act of Powers*, vol. ii., p. 61. And I shall add a third from an *Account of the Moravian Missions in Greenland*:—"It is true," says a converted Esquimaux to a missionary, "that we were ignorant heathen, and knew nothing of a God or a Saviour; and, indeed, who could tell us of Him till you came? But do not imagine that no Greenlander thought on these things; I myself have often thought. 'A kajak' (a boat) 'with all its tackle and implements does not grow into existence of itself, but must be made by the labour and industry of man, and one that does not understand it would directly spoil it. Now, the meanest bird has more skill displayed in its structure than the best kajak, and no man can make a bird. But there is still far greater art shown in the formation of a man than of any other creature—who was it that made him? I bethought me, 'he proceeded from his parents, and they from their parents; but some must have been first parents, whence did they come? Common report says they grew out of the earth; but if so, why does it not happen that men grow out of the earth still? And from whence did this same earth itself, the sea, the sun, the moon, and stars, arise? Certainly there must be some Being who made all these things; a Being that always was, and never will cease to be. He must be inexpressibly more mighty and wise than the wisest of men; and he must be good; for every thing he hath made is necessary and good for us. There may be men that know something of Him—O could I but speak to such!'"

Another thus replied:—"Man is made quite different from the brutes; the brutes have no understanding, but serve for food to each other, and all for the use of man; but man has an

Deity from tradition, has not the advantage of inspired Scriptures, but constructs his theology, like Socrates, from observations of nature, as well intellectual as physical. This obviously deserves the name of natural religion. In a third sense, even when the enquirer is acquainted with the written word of God, his religion may be termed natural, if he makes no use of revealed authority, but frames a theory, like Lord Shaftesbury and others, out of reflections and deductions from natural phenomena. Such a religion must be miserably defective, but such as it is, may nevertheless be termed a religion of nature.

Many writers of my father's advanced age and experience as an author, might have lost patience when beset with needless and hypercritical objections, like those just mentioned. But his constitutional mildness of temper prevailed. Seeing clearly the way before him, he was not distressed by useless warnings of danger. He also received encouragement from other friends entitled to his warmest esteem, and in particular, from two eminent prelates of the Church of England. The latter candidly admitted, that arguments from a layman in defence of Christianity are received, however invidiously, with greater favour than from the clergy, by the very persons who, from

intelligent soul, is afraid of no creature in the world, yet man is afraid of a future state. Who is he afraid of *there*? There is a great spirit that has dominion over us—O! did we but know Him!"

their prejudices against it, have greatest need of instruction in its evidences. They conceived, also, that an individual like Sir John Sinclair, who had devoted a long life to the temporal happiness of his fellow-creatures, had peculiar claims upon their attention, when addressing them on the subject of religion and of happiness eternal.

In proportion, however, as the infirmities of age increased upon him, he became more apprehensive that he would not live to execute his undertaking. He often used to say, "I am much afraid that I have delayed too long commencing this work ; if I could only live one year more, I should complete my digest of religion, and then all my labours as an author will close for ever."

As his work was intended to be elementary, he supposes himself addressing an ill-instructed or wholly ignorant catechumen, and in the first chapter gives a general view of human nature, both corporeal and mental, as indicative of design. He proceeds to the globe which man inhabits, and explains the evidences of wisdom, power, and goodness in its structure, its component parts, its atmosphere, its productions, and its inferior living occupants. He then treats of the heavenly bodies by which the globe is surrounded ; and expatiates upon their number, their magnitude, their variety, their distance, and the perpetually sustained harmony of their motions. Having thus demonstrated the existence of a God from the pheno-



in spite of the number of scientific matters which are committed to my charge, I have accomplished all that we proposed to do. Your plan of the work, entitled, ‘*Code of Natural and Revealed Religion*,’ of which I have received several copies, was translated a month ago, and the manuscript, in French, has been read by a number of clergymen, magistrates, and other most respectable characters, who concur in opinion, that the object of the work is excellent, and that it will be most useful. In the course of a fortnight, I shall circulate upon the Continent, in French, five or six thousand copies of your plan. They think, in Paris, if five hundred copies were sent to you, that you might get them transmitted to a number of *Savans*, or learned characters abroad, by the captains of vessels going to various foreign countries, which would spread every where a knowledge of the work. At Paris, by the favour of the Diplomatic Corps, I reckon upon sending copies to the Sovereign Princes, to their Ministers, and to the various learned institutions on the Continent.

“I have read myself, at a meeting of the members of the French Society of Universal Statistics, that part of your Code, entitled, ‘General View of Human Nature, and of the Corporeal Structure and Mental Faculties of Man;’ and I have the pleasure of acquainting you, that the interesting section regarding those subjects has been judged *new*, *clear*, and *precise*. It will be inserted in the next number of our journal.

decorations, there used to be nothing better than a turf cottage with a stone floor. Instead of this level road, there was once a steep ascent over that hill.— There stands a convenient bridge where there was once a dangerous ford. In that roofless old castle I have often dined with the grandfather of the present proprietor.' It seemed as if in every house my father had known those whose place now knew them no more ; contemporaries who had started into life with himself, but who had long since terminated their career, and beauties who had long since faded into oblivion.

“ He enjoyed his journey much, and delighted to explore the various hills and glens with which his eye had been familiar in early life. But his thoughts were often of a solemn character, and he frequently declared that he looked upon this journey as a last adieu to all those well-remembered scenes. In this instance, very contrary to his usual practice, he gave up in a great degree the use of his pen, and confined himself to reflection and conversation.

“ We took thirteen days to reach Caithness. We spent one of them at Dunrobin Castle, seat of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland. A splendid fête was given in the old feudal mansion to the electors of the county. Among the family pictures we were anxious to see our grandmother, Lady Janet. We were shown the Red Earl, the Black Earl, and the

age in favour of the parishioners, who, to our great surprise, were unanimous in their choice of a minister.

“ When my father was about to leave Caithness, there was a very strong, as well as general feeling of regret throughout the county. As he passed along the road, a number of proprietors and farmers met him on the boundaries of their respective possessions ; and, in spite of his earnest wish that they would not put themselves to such trouble on his account, escorted him on horseback to the farthest limit of their grounds. The last proprietor towards the south was Mr Horne, so many years my father’s confidential agent. He was too old to ride, but followed us in his carriage, and when we reached the ridge of a mountain, at the utmost verge of the county, alighted to take leave. My father did the same, and the two friends, who had known each other so intimately above half a century, bade each other a long, and as it proved, a final farewell.

“ My father was deeply affected on leaving a county, to the prosperity of which his time, and fortune, and talents, had been from earliest youth so constantly and so successfully directed ; and it was with an expression of mournful regret, such as seldom escaped from his serene and cheerful mind, that he crossed for the last time the Ord of Caithness.”

The last visit of the Baronet to London took place in May 1835, a few months before his death. His

John Lubbock was to carry forward with greater vigour the comparison of the two codes, and to consult such literary friends on whose judgment he placed great reliance. He resided for some time at the Strand Inn, and afterwards removed to Bayswater. During his absence he suffered a severe loss in the death of his faithful servant, George Quinton, who had been his attendant for above twenty years.

The singular individual had been recommended to me by Mr. Lubbock, who had employed him as clerk and amanuensis to the Board of Agriculture. There is a memoir of Quinton in an old Magazine describing him as a youth of extraordinary talents, but afterwards so poorly that receiving the usual advantages of education till in connection with other studies he succeeded in gaining a degree at the University of Oxford. By this effort he obtained a prize of one hundred pounds with which he paid his expenses in acquiring a knowledge of the law. When he came back over to this country he was seen in some time labouring under great depression of mind, owing, as he afterwards acknowledged, to a disappointment in love. In the first of his disappointments, the first youth one day came to Cambridge Street, inquiring to know whether he was staying at the house he had just mentioned, but on finding that he was not, he returned at the end of the day. Though his mind was good, his ideas and personal appearance were indifferently mixed, for he appeared almost every thing in

the purchase of prints and materials for drawing. He instructed my sisters in painting, but his method of teaching was beyond measure wearisome and mechanical. They were kept so long drawing eyes, noses, and ears separately, that they almost despaired of living to include all these laboriously studied features in one entire face. This original creature had great difficulty in expressing himself, but when once he fairly started on any subject, his periods, delivered slowly in a monotonous under tone, and involved in continual parentheses, were interminable. He had been some time with us before we discovered that he had more languages than one. His pupils one day, at their drawing lesson, exchanged a few remarks upon him in French, when he immediately surprised them by the warning that he was not ignorant of that language, and it afterwards appeared that he had acquired a smattering of Latin. He supported an aged mother in Suffolk, but none of us could ever learn that he had any other friend, relation, or acquaintance, beyond our own household. He was infected at one time with the Franklinian prejudice against the cruelty of killing animals for food, and adhered for several years to a Brahminical diet; nor could even the prescription of a physician induce him to give up this peculiarity.

When the family, in 1819, were about to sail from London to Edinburgh, my father paid off Quinton, and we expected to see no more of the eccentric

address of congratulation or condolence from poor Quinton, who, regularly on my father's birthday, placed a neatly written card upon his table, expressing George Quinton's hope that the following year would be spent as usefully and as happily as the past. This annual tribute of affection, he afterwards quietly abstracted, having ascertained that it had been read; sixteen, carefully tied up, and written on both sides (lest some accident should have turned the blank side uppermost), were found among his papers after his decease. The doctrines which he heard on Sundays must have been rather miscellaneous, as his practice was to walk as far as possible into the country, till it was nearly time for morning service, when he would hasten to the nearest place of worship, of whatever denomination it might chance to be. He was much delighted with the scenery around Edinburgh, and completed a drawing of the town from the Calton Hill, one of the most minutely accurate representations I have ever seen. None of us saw or heard of the picture till the evening of its completion, when we were informed, by a note in his usual manner, that his work was ready for exhibition. Nothing could exceed Quinton's look of triumph as he unfolded the performance, nor the expressions of admiration which it elicited from all observers. One of the ladies, however, ventured to point out certain strange figures, which might expose the artist to ill-natured censure. In particular, an object in the foreground was referred



employed in an account of my father's preparation for the closing scene of his honourable life. I have already in my first chapter mentioned, that he received in early youth a religious education from his excellent mother, and in her had seen a living example of practical piety. "Under her care," he says (in a private memorandum upon the subject), "I was accustomed to read the scriptures ; to pray regularly ; and to attend the ordinances of religion." There are still extant among his papers various evidences of the timely impression made by Christian principle upon his mind, in hymns, forms of prayer, and striking quotations from the best divines. At a later period, however, after he had entered upon public life, and had become immersed in those absorbing pursuits, which, without habitual watchfulness and prayer, are so apt to weaken, and even paralyse religious feelings, he had reason to lament, as he himself acknowledged, that spiritual interests were in a great degree forgotten. His moral character continued irreproachable, but his piety had declined. On one occasion, his friend Arthur Young, with a fidelity not common in the world, ventured to remonstrate with him on his spiritual lukewarmness. "Your conduct," said Mr Young, "surprises me beyond measure. You are a moral man. You do all the good in your power ; you fulfil with great strictness all your relative duties ; but you are not a Christian. You hardly ever attend the public ordinances of religion. You rarely, if ever, read the Bible, and



son, died. The last letter of that eminent man was a solemn warning to prepare for futurity. Like himself, the Bishop had been engrossed too much by worldly cares, and actuated inordinately by ambition. The two friends had been often and long associated in pursuits merely political or literary; and the Bishop, at the time of writing his farewell, had been visited with those presages of dissolution, which, however unavailing to the foolhardy and the reprobate, are so wisely fitted to instruct mankind in the nothingness of all pursuits but one. After describing the acute pain he suffered, and the utter inability of the physicians to anticipate the result, he continues: "therefore I consult none, but wait with fortitude and humble trust the exit of this life, and the beginning of another. Your affectionate friend. R. L."

The earnest exhortations of another valued correspondent, Mr Wilberforce, appear also to have made a salutary impression upon my father's mind. The following may be given as an example :

" Brighton, 4th Dec. 1815.

" My dear Sir John,

" I do admire your indefatigable and inexhaustible energy; and I must say I respect that versatility in the direction of your powers, which entitles you in another way to the praise which Dr Johnson, with all his *disaffection* towards dissenters, lavished on Dr Watts; for that he, the same man, could at one time

poser of both. "I began once more," he says, "to appreciate the value of devotion, and to profit by the scriptures as the only source of present, but more especially of future happiness."

From papers written after this period, it appears that Christian principles, Christian hopes and consolations gradually acquired ascendancy over his mind. I am gratified to find among his papers, various evidences of religious feeling. Several forms of prayer occur, adapted to his own private exigencies, as well as to the political aspect of the times.

In 1821, he drew up with his own hand a testamentary document, in which, after solemn profession of his faith in the Jewish and Christian scriptures as declarations of the Divine will, he acknowledges his unfitness as a fallen creature to abide the scrutiny of Omniscient justice, and humbly prays forgiveness through the mediation of his Redeemer.

Another interesting paper is a short address, in 1823, to surviving connexions, on the impropriety of indulging grief for the loss of near relations or particular friends. He contends that Christians, when visited with bereavement, should not withdraw in sullen dependency from the duties of their station; but should manifest their Christianity by their patience, looking forward with cheerful hope to re-union in a better world, and taking comfort from the reflection of David—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

For some years before his death, he assembled every day his family for divine worship, and was anxious, on such occasions, that the prayers offered should recognise the great leading doctrines of the gospel, and express, in the fullest manner, feelings of humility, confidence, and thankfulness. Like Dr Johnson, he sometimes commenced the new year with an appropriate prayer. That which he wrote for the last new year of his life, and which he intended as an addition to the usual family devotions, may be here inserted as a specimen of these compositions.

“ Almighty and most merciful Father, thou only giver of every true and perfect gift, we bow down before Thee, acknowledging our many past transgressions, and entreating thy favour, thy mercy, and protection for the time to come. More especially, we implore thy gracious acceptance of our humble thanksgivings for thy goodness towards us during the year that has just closed—during which, no calamity has befallen any member of the family, while the whole of it has been distinguished by unceasing marks of thy Providential care. We humbly pray, most gracious Father, for the continuance of thy goodness during the year that has now commenced. May it be marked, equally with the last, by the tokens of thy mercy, and call forth the gratitude which thy beneficence so justly claims. With that firm reliance on the mediation of our blessed Saviour, which this season of the year so peculiarly calls forth, we conclude these humble pe-

and lead us to prepare for our  
parents," he added, "of child  
and intimate friends, all unite in  
to quit this temporary abode.

sons become strangers upon earth  
otherwise than willing to withd

The influence of religion appe  
ing placidity and cheerfulness o  
creasing infirmities. At such a  
survives his contemporaries, wh  
vated by religion, has genera  
earthly happiness; he is apt t  
his habits, and lukewarm in hi  
with austerity on even innoc  
he can no longer share them :  
decaying energy makes him su  
The force of circumstances, or  
a cold and stern philosophy, may  
to the world from which he is a

At no period of his long life did my father take so warm an interest in even the ordinary proceedings of his family as immediately before his death. He spent his time more than ever in their society. Each of us appeared to become dearer to him as the period of separation seemed more at hand. When any of us was absent, the vacant seat in the domestic circle immediately caught his eye, and excited affectionate enquiry. He grew more considerate than ever towards his dependents, and studied to prevent his infirmities from interfering with their comfort. Some months before his death, understanding that his confidential servant, Charles Macbean, was accustomed to have family worship at his own house every evening, he resolved on retiring to rest an hour before the time to which he had been accustomed. "My heart sunk within me," said this faithful domestic, "when Sir John announced to me this kind intention; I feared that he would not long be spared."

Advancing years and a decaying constitution forewarned him of dissolution, but he contemplated the event with Christian fortitude and calmness. It was remarkable how little he dreaded the physical concomitants of death. Two years before he died, residing at Portobello, near Edinburgh, he one night felt so unwell, that he did not expect to survive till morning. He called up one of his sons, stated his apprehensions to him, gave him minute directions as

He entertained afterwards Professor Forbes, Macdonald of Staffa, and a few other friends at dinner. He derived much enjoyment from their society, and for some time sat up after their departure, commenting with vivacity on the topics discussed in the conversation of the evening.

Next morning, however, when his servant went to awaken him, he was found in a state of great exhaustion, and had evidently spent a restless night. Two medical friends, Dr Abercrombie and Mr Hamilton Bell, were in immediate attendance. They ascertained that he was not suffering from apoplexy, as had been apprehended, but merely from extreme prostration of strength, the natural result of over exertion in old age, when no reaction takes place in the system. They were at first much alarmed, but, as no symptom of organic disease appeared, began to hope that the timely use of stimulants might restore him. They enjoined rest, and pressed upon him the necessity of abstinence from all exertion, mental or bodily, a rule which even now he found it difficult to observe. He seldom attempted to leave his bed, but sometimes insisted upon transferring to paper ideas on the various subjects which occupied his ever busy mind. He wished all the family to visit him in succession at short intervals, and being unable to attend as usual the family devotions, directed that the chapter chosen for that occasion should be again read to him in private, accompanied by appropriate prayers. The

attachment to the people of the Highlands, and his deep regret that their moral and religious welfare had been hitherto so imperfectly provided for. These were the last words I heard him utter. In the afternoon of that day, a week from the commencement of his illness, symptoms of immediate dissolution suddenly alarmed us. Medical advice was resorted to, but without effect. As he felt his end approaching, he ordered every one to withdraw. "All is now over," said he; "retire, that I may pray." He closed the curtains, and his voice was heard in audible supplication to Almighty God. Soon after he had ceased, it was ascertained that he had fainted. From this state he did not recover; and such was the serenity of his departure, that though several of us were watching anxiously around him, it was impossible to tell at what moment he expired.

The funeral took place on the 30th December, in the Royal Chapel of Holyrood. It was intended that the ceremonial should be strictly private; but the Magistrates of Edinburgh, and a deputation from the Highland Society of Scotland, requested leave to attend.

Sir John Sinclair in early life was tall, well proportioned, and athletic. He was six feet two inches in height. His features were formed nearly after the Grecian model. His usual air was that of gravity and thoughtfulness, although few could relax with more unaffected ease into an expression of good-

humoured cheerfulness. He was always of a spare habit; and as he advanced in life stooped considerably. Many representations of him are extant by eminent artists; in particular, two full-length portraits, one by West, and the other by Sir Henry Raeburn. Both represent him in the uniform of his fencible regiment: a dress which he delighted to wear long after that corps had ceased to exist. The picture by Raeburn is among his finest works, even superior to the rival performance of the President. Besides dignity and grace in the attitude, there is a vividness in the colouring which so closely approaches to nature, as to realize Sir Walter Scott's well known remark, that "Raeburn's Highland Chieftains do all but step out of the canvass."

In the intellectual character of Sir John Sinclair, the leading features were fertility of invention and indomitable perseverance. He was rather a man of talent than of genius: he occasionally amused himself with poetry, but was not successful in that branch of composition. As a speaker he was argumentative and emphatic, but not brilliant; better fitted to convince than to persuade. During his career in Parliament the House of Commons was accustomed to the most magnificent efforts of rhetorical power; to such he never aspired. Both his taste and his judgment led him to prefer clear business-like statements and solid reasonings. Occasionally, indeed, we find a passage in his speeches rising to great eloquence, but his



ordinary style was calm, argumentative, and unostentatious. His early writings are confessedly superior to his later compositions: they possess more energy, and are unencumbered by those minute subdivisions, which, though adopted for the sake of perspicuity, sometimes embarrass and fatigue the reader. His works are voluminous, but notwithstanding this disadvantage (for such it often is) they are redundant rather in facts than in words. The information he accumulated upon the various subjects of which he treats is immense; for he studiously improved every opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and endeavoured to make every possessor of it, to whom he could gain access, a contributor to the general stock. Few men knew so well how to elicit information from persons least habituated to communicate their ideas.

The value of his long-continued labours was acknowledged by all classes, both at home and abroad. King George III. bestowed upon him the rank of baronet, admitted him a member of his Privy Council, and was understood to have intended for him higher marks of royal favour. Twenty-two counties in Scotland voted him thanks for his services to agriculture, and their example was followed in various towns, by the inhabitants of which he was regarded less as an indefatigable friend to husbandry than as a general benefactor to his country. He was received into a large proportion of the literary, scientific, and

It was chiefly by adherence to the strictest rules of temperance, that Sir John Sinclair, with unimpaired faculties, outlived the ordinary term of mortal existence. During his long life, he never once transgressed the rules of sobriety. Having ascertained the kind of diet best adapted to his constitution, he adhered to it from year to year, with undeviating regularity. His chief imprudence regarded expenditure. He forgot limited amount of means, when objects of great national interest were to be secured.

No patron could have greater zeal for advancing the interests of his friends, or for encouraging meritorious individuals, however obscure in station or depressed in fortune. About two hundred persons owed to him their success in life.\* He never cherished enmity towards those who opposed or injured him. He was even blamed for not distinguishing sufficiently between supporters and opponents, friends and enemies. He envied no man's reputation, but was eager to advance it wherever it was well deserved—a generosity which he did not always himself experience. He was no violent partisan; but admired talent and worth in men of all political sentiments; and although a hearty and zealous patriot, he never permitted national rivalries nor antipathies to bias his moral judg-

\* When it was reported to him that one of these beneficiaries had said, "Sir John did no more for me than write a letter," his observation was, "Little does — think how much care, and toil, and expense it has cost me to have the power of writing such a letter."

[ *The Following Catalogue of the various Books, Tracts, and Papers printed by Sir John Sinclair, is probably incomplete, but it includes all those of which he himself happened to reserve a copy.* ]

## BOOKS

WRITTEN BY

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR HIMSELF.

	vols.
1 Observations on the Scottish Dialect, 1782, 8vo,	1
2 History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire, 1784; the first edition in two volumes, 4to; two subsequent editions in three volumes, 8vo,	3
3 General View of the Agriculture of the Northern Counties and Islands of Scotland, including the Counties of Cromarty, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, and the Islands of Orkney and Shetland; with Observations on the Means of their Improvement, 4to, 1795,	1
4 Essays on Miscellaneous Subjects, 8vo, 1802,	1
5 An Account of the Systems of Husbandry adopted in the more improved districts of Scotland, 8vo, 1812,	2
6 Dissertation on the Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian, with an Appendix, 1807,	1
Carry forward,	9

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 397**

**PAPERS AND PAMPHLETS BY SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.**

**1782.**

- 1 Thoughts on the Naval Strength of the British Empire, Part I.
- 2 Do. Part II.
- 3 Lucubrations during a Short Recess.
- 4 The Impulse of the Moment.
- 5 Public Hints to the Independent Senators of Great Britain, in four numbers.
- 6 Thoughts on the Propriety of Dissolving the Present Parliament.
- 7 Reflections on the Expediency of Increasing the Present Number of the Representatives of the People.
- 8 Considerations on Militias and Standing Armies, with some Observations on the Plan of Defence suggested by the Earl of Shelburne.

**1783.**

- 9 An Historical Essay on Addison.
- 10 Hints addressed to the Public on the State of our Finances; three editions.
- 11 Memoir, containing a Plan for Re-establishing Public Credit and the Finances of the Country.
- 12 The Propriety of Retaining Gibraltar Impartially Considered.

**1787.**

- 13 General Observations regarding the Present Political Circumstances of the Kingdom of Denmark.
- 14 Do. the Kingdom of Sweden.
- 15 Do. the Russian Empire.
- 16 Letters to the Chamber of Commerce at Edinburgh on the Subject of the Corn Laws.
- 17 Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland on Shetland Wool, with an Appendix con-

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 399**

- 30 Hints respecting the State of the Camp at Aberdeen, with some Observations on Encampments in general.
- 31 Address to the Board of Agriculture, stating the Progress that has been made in carrying on the measures undertaken by the Board for the improvement of the country during the second session of its establishment.
- 32 Address to the Members of the Board of Agriculture on the Apprehended Scarcity.
- 33 General View of the Enquiries essential for the internal improvement of the kingdom, with the plan for reprinting the Agricultural Surveys in a corrected form.

1796.

- 34 Address to the Board of Agriculture, stating the Progress that has been made by the Board during the third session since its establishment.
- 35 Plan of an Agreement among the Powers of Europe and the United States of America, for the purpose of rewarding discoveries for the general benefit of society.

1797.

- 36 Address to the Farmers of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Plan for the more speedy conveyance of his Majesty's Forces.
- 37 Thoughts respecting the ensuing Campaign on the Borders of Italy, and its probable issue.
- 38 Address to the Board of Agriculture.

1798.

- 39 Thoughts on the Dismissal of the Present Ministers, and the Restoration of Peace, addressed to the worthy Livery of the city of London.
- 40 Statistical Account of the Parish of Thurso, in the County of Caithness.

**400      LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS.**

- 41 Hints on the Present Alarming Crisis.**
- 42 Letters on the State of the Nation, addressed to Lord Thurlow.**
- 43 Observations regarding the Remuneration applied for by the Fencible Regiments.**
- 44 Proposals for Establishing a Joint Stock Tontine Company with a capital of L.60,000, for the purpose of ascertaining the principles of Agricultural Improvement, and the other sources of public prosperity.**
- 45 Speech on the Bill for Imposing a Tax on Income.**
- 46 Cursory Observations on the Military System of Great Britain, in so far as respects the formation of a Corps of Infantry.**
- 47 Thoughts on Circulation and Paper Currency, with some Observations on the Means of Preventing the Distresses to which the Mercantile Interest is so frequently exposed from the Scarcity of Money, and of rendering the Tax on Income less burdensome to individuals, and more productive to the Exchequer.**

**1800.**

- 48 Hints regarding the advantages that may be derived by the public in general, and by the Landed interest in particular, from the Establishment of a Corporation, with a large capital devoted to Agricultural improvement.**
- 49 Proposals for establishing, by subscription, a New Institution, to be called the Plough, or Joint Stock Farming Society, for the purpose of ascertaining the principles of Agricultural improvement.**
- 50 Account of the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles, drawn up by Colonel Sir John Sinclair.**
- 51 Enquiry into the State of Scotland.**

**1801.**

- 52 Observations on the means of enabling a Cottager to**

keep a Cow, by the produce of a small portion of Arable land.

- 53 Sketch of an Intended System of Education for George Sinclair, from the 12th to the 24th year of his age, submitted to the consideration of those who have made the Education of Youth the object of their particular attention.

- 54 Culture of Potatoes.

- 55 A Note of Various Measures calculated for the Improvement of the County of Caithness, carrying on in 1801.

, 1802.

- 56 Sketch of a System of Education for a Young Gentleman intended for public life.

- 57 A short statement of various measures calculated for the Improvement of the County of Caithness, carrying on in the course of the year 1802.

- 58 Sketch of an Introduction to the proposed Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, as drawn up for the consideration of a few intelligent friends.

- 59 An account of the Corn Stands at Woburn Abbey.

- 60 Hints as to the advantages of Old Pastures, and on the conversion of Grass lands into tillage.

1803.

- 61 Proposals for a Tontine on a new principle, by the establishment of Age Annuities, increasing by survivorship, and a division of the whole sum thereby raised among the ultimate survivors.

- 62 On the Political State of Europe, drawn up for the consideration of a foreign Statesman in a high political situation.

- 63 Impartial Thoughts on Peace and War, together with

**402      LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS.**

some Hints regarding the ability of Great Britain to carry on the contest, should it be unavoidable.

- 64 Hints submitted to the consideration of the Select Committee, to whom the survey of the coasts and central Highlands of Scotland has been referred, including some observations on the advantages of domestic colonization.
- 65 A short Statement of various measures calculated for the improvement of the County of Caithness in 1803.

1804.

- 66 Observations on the Propriety of Preserving the Dress, the Language, the Poetry, the Music, and the Customs of the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland, addressed to the Highland Societies of London and of Scotland.
- 67 Queries addressed to the Respectable and Independent Members of both Houses in April 1804.

1806.

- 68 An Account of the Moss Improvements of John Wilkinson, Esq. of Castlehead in Lancashire.
- 69 Plan of a Society for promoting Agricultural improvement, to be constituted by a Royal or Parliamentary Charter.

1807.

- 70 Introductory Observations, pointing out some additional measures submitted to the consideration of the Board of Agriculture.
- 71 Result of enquiries recently made regarding Athletic Exercises.

1808.

- 72 Plan of a Society for ascertaining the Means of preserving Health.



**1809.**

- 73 Address to the Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, and Directors of the Honourable East India Company.**
- 74 Hints regarding the absolute necessity of greater energy in conducting our Military operations.**

**1810.**

- 75 Observations on the Report of the Bullion Committee. Three editions.**
- 76 Remarks on Mr Huskisson's Pamphlet, with an explanation of the real nature and advantages of the present system of circulation.**
- 77 Genealogy of the Sinclairs of Ulbster.**
- 78 Cursory Hints regarding Paper Currency.**
- 79 Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland on the proceedings which have lately taken place for dissolving the Union between the two Kingdoms.**

**1811.**

- 80 An Account of James Small, and of his Improvements in the construction of Agricultural Implements.**
- 81 Miscellaneous Papers, drawn up occasionally as a relaxation from severer studies.**
- 82 On the State of Society at Edinburgh.**
- 83 Speech on the Report of the Bullion Committee on Wednesday the 15th of May.**
- 84 Address to the Dalkeith Monthly Farming Club, at a meeting held on the 26th of December, 1811.**

**1812.**

- 85 Hints regarding the means of enabling Great Britain to surmount her present financial difficulties, and to provide her people with food from her domestic resources.**
- 86 Political Maxims regarding the Importance of Agriculture and the means of its Improvement.**

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 405**

**India Islands, and the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo.**

- 100 **Hints regarding the use of Coffee as a beverage, and on the art of making it, addressed to the members of the Alfred.**
- 101 **Letter to the Committee of Merchants interested in the Warehousing or Bonding System.**

**1815.**

- 102 **Thoughts on the Agricultural and Financial state of the country, and on the means of rescuing the landed and farming interests from their present depressed state.**
- 103 **Hints regarding the Agriculture of the Netherlands, compared with that of Great Britain, and some observations on the means of diminishing the expense of growing corn, of preventing the mildew in Wheat, the rot in Sheep, and the introduction of other Improvements into British Agriculture.**
- 104 **Account of some experiments to promote the improvement of Fruit Trees, by peeling the bark, with a description of the instruments calculated for that purpose, and engravings of them.**
- 105 **On the Peace Establishment.**
- 106 **History of the Campaign of the British, Dutch, Hanoverian, and Brunswick Armies, under the command of the Duke of Wellington, and of the Prussians, under Prince Blucher of Wahlstadt, by C. de M.; with additional particulars, and an appendix, by Sir John Sinclair.**
- 107 **Ode on the Restoration of the House of Orange.**
- 108 **A Messieurs les Rédacteurs de l'Observateur.**

**1816.**

- 109 **On Circulation and Coin, and the means of arresting the Progress of our Public Calamities.**
- 110 **Four Letters on the Distresses of the Times.**

- 120 Prospectus explaining the Nature and Superior Advantages of "the Codean System of Knowledge," with the Plan of an Association, for the collection and diffusion of Useful Information.
- 121 Observations respectfully submitted to the Select and Secret Committees of both Houses of Parliament, appointed to consider the propriety of resuming Cash Payments, or continuing the Bank Restriction.
- 122 Thoughts on Paper Circulation, with some remarks on the Speech of the Earl of Liverpool in the House of Peers on the report of the Bank Committee, and a Plan for re-establishing the Financial circumstances of the Country.
- 123 Thoughts on the Agricultural Question, with Observations on the Arguments brought forward in support of an unlimited importation of Foreign Corn.
- 124 Address to the Reformers of Great Britain in general, and of Glasgow in particular, on the Plans they have in view.
- 125 On the State of the Nation, and on the necessity of energetic Measures, and a Union of Parties, to save the Country from destruction.
- 126 Exhortation to the Operative Weavers and other Manufacturers in Glasgow, Paisley, and other Manufacturing Towns and Villages.

1820.

- 127 The Creed of Improved Circulation, explanatory of the Principles of the New System of Currency, and proving that the Distresses of the Country are principally owing to our returning to a circulation—in amount inadequate to our wants, and of Foreign extraction.
- 128 Account of some singular incidents in the Life of the Right Hon. Sir John Sinclair, Bart.
- 129 Hints on reducing the National Debt.

- 130 Address to the Citizens of Edinburgh, and to the Inhabitants of North Britain in General, on his Majesty's expected Visit to Scotland.
- 131 On the Causes of our National Distresses; arising from the rate of Exchange being rendered favourable to England, in order to force the Importation of Gold, by means of which we impose a burden of above twenty per cent on our exported Manufactures, promote the Investment of British Capital in Foreign Funds, and encourage Emigration.
- 132 On the Means of Improving the Manufacturing, Agricultural, and Financial Circumstances of the Country. Accompanied by two Explanatory Tables.
- 133 Remarks on the Merchants' Petition, and on the Depression of Agriculture.
- 134 Letter on Codification.
- 135 Political Maxims on the subject of Circulation or Currency.
- 136 Correspondence respecting the Financial State of the Country, and in particular its Circulating Medium, between Sir Robert Peel, Bart., Richard Hart Davis Esq. M.P., Thomas Attwood, Esq. of Birmingham, David Ricardo, Esq. M.P., and the Right Hon. Sir John Sinclair, Bart.

## 1821.

- 137 Plan of a Society for investigating the subject of Circulation, by rewarding those who transmit to the Society the best Information respecting the Currency of Foreign Countries, and the most important suggestions for placing the Circulating Medium of the British Empire on the most advantageous footing.
- 138 Hints as to the most advantageous Mode of Managing the Merino breed of Sheep in Caithness.

- 139 Reparation of St Giles' Church. Copy Circular Letter to the Faculty of Advocates.
- 140 On the Uses of Chamomile Tea.
- 141 Address to the Owners and Occupiers of Land in Great Britain and Ireland, pointing out the most effectual means of remedying the Agricultural Distresses of the Country.
- 142 Hints on the Agricultural Distresses of the Country, and the remedies applicable to them.
- 143 Petition to the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.
- 144 Speech on receiving a Silver Cup from J. W. Coke, Esq. of Norfolk.

**1822.**

- 145 Address to the Owners and Occupiers of Land in Great Britain and Ireland, pointing out effectual means for remedying the Agricultural Distresses of the Country.
- 146 Hints as to a Motion Sir John Sinclair proposes to make in the General Assembly.
- 147 On the Importance of Scotland as a separate Division of the British Empire.
- 148 Representation in behalf of the Landed and Farming Interests, pointing out the Causes of their Distresses and the Means of remedying them.
- 149 Hints on Circulation, and the Means of Re-establishing the Prosperity of the Country by an Improved System of Currency, uniting the advantages of a Metallic and of a Paper Circulation, with an Account of the Paper Circulation of Scotland, on the basis of which the Prosperity of that part of the United Kingdom has principally arisen.
- 150 Plan for Re-establishing the Power and Prosperity of

1. Important Information Regarding  
The Project

- 1. The project is a study of the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 2. The project is a study of the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 3. The project is a study of the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.

2. Objectives

- 1. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 2. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 3. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 4. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 5. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 6. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 7. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 8. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 9. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.
- 10. To determine the effects of the new law on the economy of the country.

1825.

- 164 Defence of the Landed and Farming Interests, pointing out the ruinous effects of any alteration in our present system of Corn Laws, and the important changes to which it would lead in the frame of our Government.
- 165 Resolutions in behalf of the Landed and Farming Interests, submitted to the attention of those who consider Agriculture to be the only permanent source of national prosperity.

1826.

- 166 On the Means of Relieving the present Pecuniary Embarrassments of the Country, and preventing their recurrence; together with the Plan of a Chartered Company for Promoting the Security of Country Banks.
- 167 Address to the Farmers of Great Britain and Ireland, proving that the Landlord and Tenant are equally interested in preserving the established laws of the realm, by which the admission of Foreign Grain into the British market is prohibited unless in times of scarcity.
- 168 On the Hazard of making any permanent alteration in the present system of Corn Laws.
- 169 Hints on the Preservation of Health in Hot Climates.
- 170 On the Ability of the United Kingdom (with the aid of its Colonies) to supply itself with Grain.
- 171 On the Use of Barley or Big, as food for horses.
- 172 Plan for Settling the Corn Question, and Restoring the Agricultural, Commercial, and Financial Prosperity of the United Kingdom.
- 173 On the Paper Circulation of Scotland; Proving that the Success of the Banking System in that Country depends on the Circulation of Small Notes.
- 174 Thoughts on Circulation; Pointing out the Means of Placing the Currency of the Country on a safe and

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 413**

**Necessity of Uniting the Consideration of the Corn and Currency Questions.**

- 184 On the Corn Laws of France, with a Comparison between them and those now proposed to be enacted in Great Britain.**
- 185 Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland on the Preservation of the Useful Parts of the Potato for Human Food.**
- 186 On various Modes of Feeding Horses, with a view of Saving the Consumption of Oats.**
- 187 Address to the Manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland, on their Present Depressed State, and the impossibility of any material amendment without a Change of Currency.**
- 188 Corn Laws—Statement submitted to an Adjourned General Meeting of the Landholders and Commissioners of Supply at Edinburgh.**
- 189 On the Advantages Derived from the Establishment of a Board of Agriculture in Promoting the Improvement of the Country.**
- 190 Proofs of the Advantages which have been derived from the publication of the Code of Health.**
- 191 Plan of a National Currency, proving the Necessity of Increasing the Standard Price of Gold to L.5 per ounce, as the only effectual means of insuring the prosperity of the Agricultural, Manufacturing, Commercial, Shipping, and General Interests of the Empire, all of which are suffering severely from the unfortunate Change of Currency.**
- 192 Address to the Hygeian Society, instituted for the Improvement and Preservation of Health, and Rewarding those who make Useful Medical Discoveries.**
- 193 Reasons for the maintenance and against the Abolition of the present Corn Laws.**



**414      LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS.**

- 194 Of the Advantages to be derived by the Productive Classes from a Change of Currency.**
- 195 On Crimson Clover.**
- 196 Axioms and Maxims as to the Currency.**
- 197 Correspondence on the Subject of Currency with Kirkman Finlay, Esq. of Glasgow, John Gladstone, Esq. of Liverpool, and Thomas Attwood, Esq. of Birmingham.**
- 198 On the Preservation of the Useful Parts of the Potato for Human Food.**
- 199 Proofs of the Advantages derived from the Bank Restriction, and of the mischievous Consequences which have resulted from the Resumption of Cash Payments.**

**1828.**

- 200 Gretna-Green Marriages. On the means of Preventing Clandestine Marriages by Natives of England or Ireland, in Scotland, with the Sketch of a Bill drawn up for that purpose.**
- 201 Hints Regarding the Objects of the Extensive Enquiry that has been carried on into the Culture and Uses of the Potato.**
- 202 Brief Statement of the Corn Question.**
- 203 On Potato Powder, or Farina.**
- 204 Thoughts on Catholic Emancipation, and on the Proposal of Dissolving the Union between Great Britain and Ireland.**
- 205 Account of a Singular Mode of Preventing Coughs and Sore Throats, by diminishing the Length of the Uvula.**
- 206 On the Proposed Alterations in the Entail Laws of Scotland. Letter to the Conveners of the several Counties and Stewartries.**
- 207 A Discussion between the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair, Bart. and William Jacob, Esq. of the Board of Trade, on the subject of the New Corn Laws.**

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 415**

- 208 On the Culture and Uses of Potatoes, accompanied with Engravings and Practical Directions Explanatory of the best modes of Raising, Preparing, and Using that Root.
- 209 Political Maxims, pointing out the Advantages of a Paper Circulation.
- 210 Hints on the Characteristical Qualities of the Irish Nation, and on the Union between Great Britain and Ireland.
- 211 Additional Hints as to the Employment of the Poor in the Cultivation and Manufacture of Potatoes.
- 212 Hints Regarding the Causes of our National Distresses.
- 213 Mode of Settling the Catholic Question, by a Compromise likely to be Acceptable to the Moderate of both Parties.
- 214 Additional Hints on the Corn Laws.
- 215 Address to the People of Scotland on the Catholic Question.
- 216 Address to the Owners and Occupiers of Land in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 217 On Potato Meal.
- 218 Letter to Sir Henry Parnell, Bart. M. P. Chairman of the Financial Committee.
- 219 Hints on the Preservation of Health.
- 220 On the Destructive Consequences Resulting from the Present Mode of Consuming Potatoes, and on the Means of Preserving the Potato entire in its greatest state of perfection.

1829.

- 221 Rational Mode of Employing Time for Invalids, or Persons advanced in years.
- 222 Address to the Public, on Infant Schools.
- 223 A Brief Statement of some of the most Important Ad-

vantages to be derived from Improving our Settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, and at the Mauritius, with a Short Detail of the Measures calculated for that purpose.

- 224 To the Secretary of the Society for the Improvement of Ireland.
- 225 Letter to the Commissioners for Carrying on the Improvements in the City of Edinburgh, pointing out some Alterations in the Plans now in contemplation.
- 226 On the Great Importance of the Wool Question in a National Point of View.
- 227 On the Means of Preventing the Ravages of Slugs, Grubs, the Wire-Worm, and the Wheat Fly (or *Tipula Tritici*) on our crops of Wheat.
- 228 On Protestant Emancipation, or an Exposition of the Immense Losses which this Protestant Nation has sustained from the horrors of an Unjust and Oppressive Currency, and an Explanation of the ruinous consequences which must ensue if the present system is persevered in.
- 229 On the Nature of Exchange, and an Explanation of a most Important Political Truth, that by keeping the Precious Metals at high Prices, we may ensure the Prosperity of the Agriculture, Manufactures, and General Interests of the Country.
- 230 Axioms regarding Currency, in which the Superiority of Silver over Gold as a Standard of Value is explained.
- 231 Proofs of the Assertion, that when the Price of the Precious Metals is higher in England than in Foreign Countries, it operates through the medium of the Exchange: 1st, As a Bounty on the exportation of British commodities; and, 2d, As a Tax on the importation of Foreign commodities.
- 232 Letter to the Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, and Direc-

LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 417

tors of the East India Company, on the introduction of the Bitter Cassava.

- 233 Thoughts on Currency, and the means of promoting National Prosperity by the adoption of an improved Circulation, founded on the security of solid property, and adapted to the wants and necessities of the Country.
- 234 To the Members of the Board of Trustees, for promoting the Fisheries, Manufactures, and other Improvements in Scotland.
- 235 General View of the Currency Question.
- 236 On the Fatal Consequences from the Depression of Agriculture, and the promoting a too great extension of Manufacturing Industry.
- 237 Plan for Reviving the Confidence of the Landed Interest.
- 238 On the Destructive Attempt to Repeal the Union between Great Britain and Ireland.
- 239 Plan for Promoting the Improvement and Prosperity of our West India Colonies.
- 240 On Ruptures.

1830.

- 241 Plan for publishing Digests or Codes of four of the most Interesting Branches of Human Knowledge : 1. Agriculture ; 2. Health ; 3. Political Economy ; and, 4. Religion.
- 242 Hints regarding the Causes of the Existing National Distresses, and the means of averting them.
- 243 Letter to the Marquis of Chandos, M.P., chairman of the West India Committee, on the Dangers of Immediate Emancipation.
- 244 Plan for enabling Government to reduce Taxes to the amount of L.4,000,000, and thereby essentially relieving the distresses we now experience, and pre-

- 260 Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform, with Tables exhibiting the original amount and progressive increase of the number of National Representatives ; together with some Observations on the Present State of the Representation of Scotland, and the Improvements of which it is susceptible.
- 261 Medical Hints.—For further Consideration and Enquiry.
- 262 Hints on the Means by which the important Discussions on Reform might be speedily and effectually adjusted.
- 263 Plan for accomplishing the proposed Reform in Parliament, and putting an immediate end to the present political ferment.
- 264 Thoughts on the Times, and the Risk of War, in the present circumstances of Europe.
- 265 Final Appeal to the Public on the West India Question.
- 266 Hints on the Conversion of the entire Potato into Meal, and regarding other uses to which that plant is applicable.
- 267 Address to the Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland on the plan of Radical Reform which they have in contemplation.
- 268 Lecture on the Science of Agriculture, and the Means of its Improvement.

1832

- 269 Letter to Thomas Attwood, Esq. of Birmingham, on the Currency Question.
- 270 Hints on the Advantages of Flax Husbandry and the Linen Manufacture, as practised in Flanders.
- 271 Defence of Agriculture :—On the Corn Laws, and the Necessity of protecting the Landed and Farming Interests from the ruin with which they are now

LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 421

- 285 On the Corn Laws. Letter to Lord Western.
- 286 Address to the Friends of Agricultural Improvement in the County of Caithness.
- 287 Hints on the Means of Preventing the Mischievous Effects of the Roman Malaria, and on the Improvement of Marshy Districts in general.
- 288 On Shell Marle as a Manure for Turnips.
- 289 Account of the Origin of those Cattle Shows and other Agricultural Meetings which have tended so much to excite a spirit of Improvement in England and Scotland.

1884.

- 290 Hints on the Tithe Question.
- 291 Hints on the Means of Improving the Laws regarding Church Patronage in Scotland.
- 292 Thoughts on the Propriety of Dissolving the present Parliament.
- 293 On the Means of rendering Great Britain Unconquerable, and relieving it from all apprehension of Invasion.
- 294 On the necessity of a Total Repeal of the Malt Tax, and the practicability of the Measure proved by a Conversion of the Dead Weight to the amount of from Four to Five Millions Sterling, from Temporary into Perpetual Annuities.
- 295 A Brief Statement of the Advantages which the Public would derive by converting the Dead Weight to the amount of from Three to Four Millions Sterling, from Temporary into Perpetual Annuities.
- 296 Plan for enabling Government to reduce Taxes to the amount of from Three to Four Millions Sterling.
- 297 On the Immense Advantages to be derived from the Introduction of Spade Husbandry in the Cultivation of Arable and Grass Lands, with a view to the In-

**422 LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS.**

- crease of the National Produce, the Improvement of the Soil, and the Employment of Immense Numbers of the Labouring Classes of the Community.
- 298 Hints on Vegetation, the Agents necessary for the Production of Plants, and those which are Injurious or Destructive to them.
- 299 Preliminary Observations on the Plan of a Code, or Digest of Religion.

1835.

- 300 Important Hints. Maxims in regard to Commerce and Currency; Comparison between a Restricted and an Abundant Circulation, and the Means pointed out of Restoring our National Prosperity.
- 301 Thoughts on the Currency and the Means of Relieving the Country from the Distresses which it now experiences.
- 302 On the Destructive Consequences that would result from Encouraging the Importation of Foreign Corn.
- 303 Hints on the proposed Monument to the Memory of Sir Walter Scott.
- 304 Hints on the Currency, and the Means of Re-establishing the Prosperity of the Country, by Improving our Means of Circulation.
- 305 Letter to the Chairman of the Lothian Tenantry.
- 306 Letter to Dr D. B. Reid, on the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.
- 307 An Effectual Means of Restoring the Prosperity of the Country by the Issuing of Small Notes convertible into Silver, and adding Half a Million per annum to the Public Income, by which the most Obnoxious Taxes might be got rid of.
- 308 Plan of a Meeting for constituting a Society to Supply the City of London with Milk and other Articles, the Produce of the Dairy.

- 309 On a Valuable Means of applying Friction and Heat in Chronic Inflammation and Swelling of the Eyelids.
- 310 Statistical Display of the Population of Great Britain and Ireland, arranged in its Various Classes.
- 311 A Brief Statement of the Question between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, stating the result of the Discussion, and explaining the Grounds on which a Preference ought to be given to one of the Parties.
- 312 On the Extinction of the Malt Tax, and Distillation from Wheat.
- 313 On the necessity of a Total Repeal of the Malt Tax, the immense Advantages that would result therefrom, and the practicability of the Measure proved.
- 314 Hints on the Tithe Question.
- 315 On the Means of effectually Relieving the Landed and Farming Interests from the Distresses which they now experience.
- 

SHORT PAPERS AND PAMPHLETS NOT DATED.

- 316 Information respecting the Castle of Dunsinnan, or Dunsinane, and on the probability that Shakspeare had collected on the spot the Traditions of the Country respecting Macbeth, and founded thereon his celebrated Drama.
- 317 Hints regarding Cattle, drawn up with the view of being inserted in the Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, and printed now for the purpose of obtaining Additional Facts and Observations on that interesting subject.



tained by the Change of Currency, and the extinction of Small Notes.

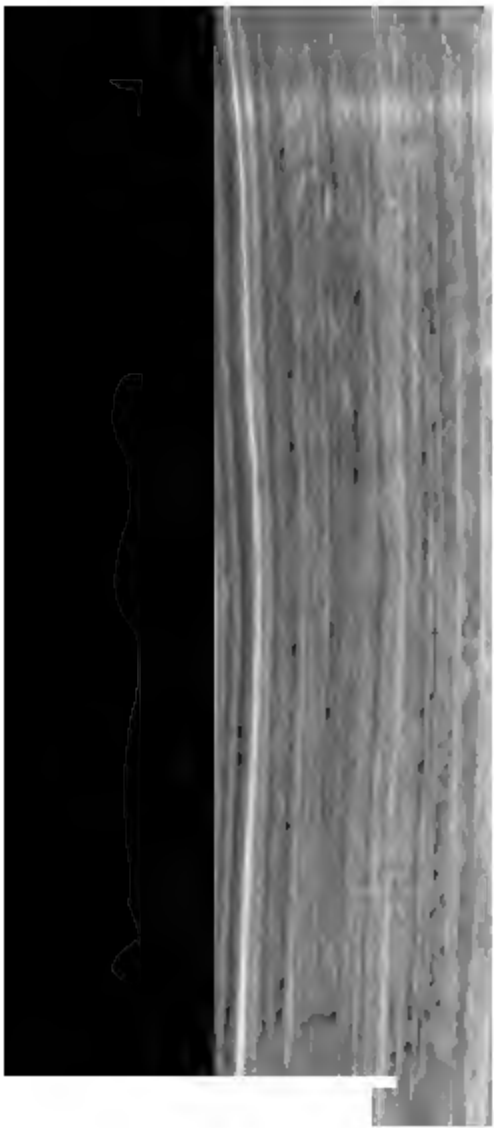
- 334 On the Indispensable Necessity of preserving a Paper Circulation in the more remote districts of the Empire.
- 335 Hints as to Autographs.
- 336 Hints explanatory of the Nature and Objects of a proposed Code of Political Economy.
- 337 Statistical Display of the Occupations of the Male Population, twenty years of age and upwards, in each section of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, deduced from the returns made to Parliament in 1831.
- 338 Resolutions submitted to the consideration of the Agricultural Classes.
- 339 On the means of Taxing the Funded as well as Landed Interest.
- 340 On a Plan by which the British Settlements in the East and West Indies might be essentially benefited.
- 341 On the Nature of Cash Accounts as granted by the Banks of Scotland.
- 342 On the Management of an Extensive Property.
- 343 Hints regarding the Proposed Reduction in our Peace Establishments.
- 344 Hints on the Character of General Washington.
- 345 Whigs and Tories.
- 346 On the destructive attempt to Repeal the Union between Great Britain and Ireland.
- 347 Hints regarding the policy of Establishing a Colony on a great scale at the Cape of Good Hope.
- 348 On the Total Repeal of the Malt Tax.
- 349 On the means of Improving the Systems of Education in Scotland.
- 350 On the Formation of a Company for the Erection of a

**LIST OF SIR JOHN SINCLAIR'S WORKS. 427**

**Temporary Reversionary Interests in the Public Funds.**

- 364 Information Regarding the Carlisle and Keswick Codlin Apples.**
- 365 Hints Regarding a Spanish Grain called Escanda.**
- 366 Hints to the Landed Interest.**
- 367 On the Corn Laws, the Improvements of which they are Susceptible, and the Necessity of adhering to the Principle of the Present System, but Remedying its Defects.**

**THE END.**





1



